



BUNTY
PRESCOTT
AT ENGLISHMAN'S CAMP
MAJOR M.J. PHILLIPS



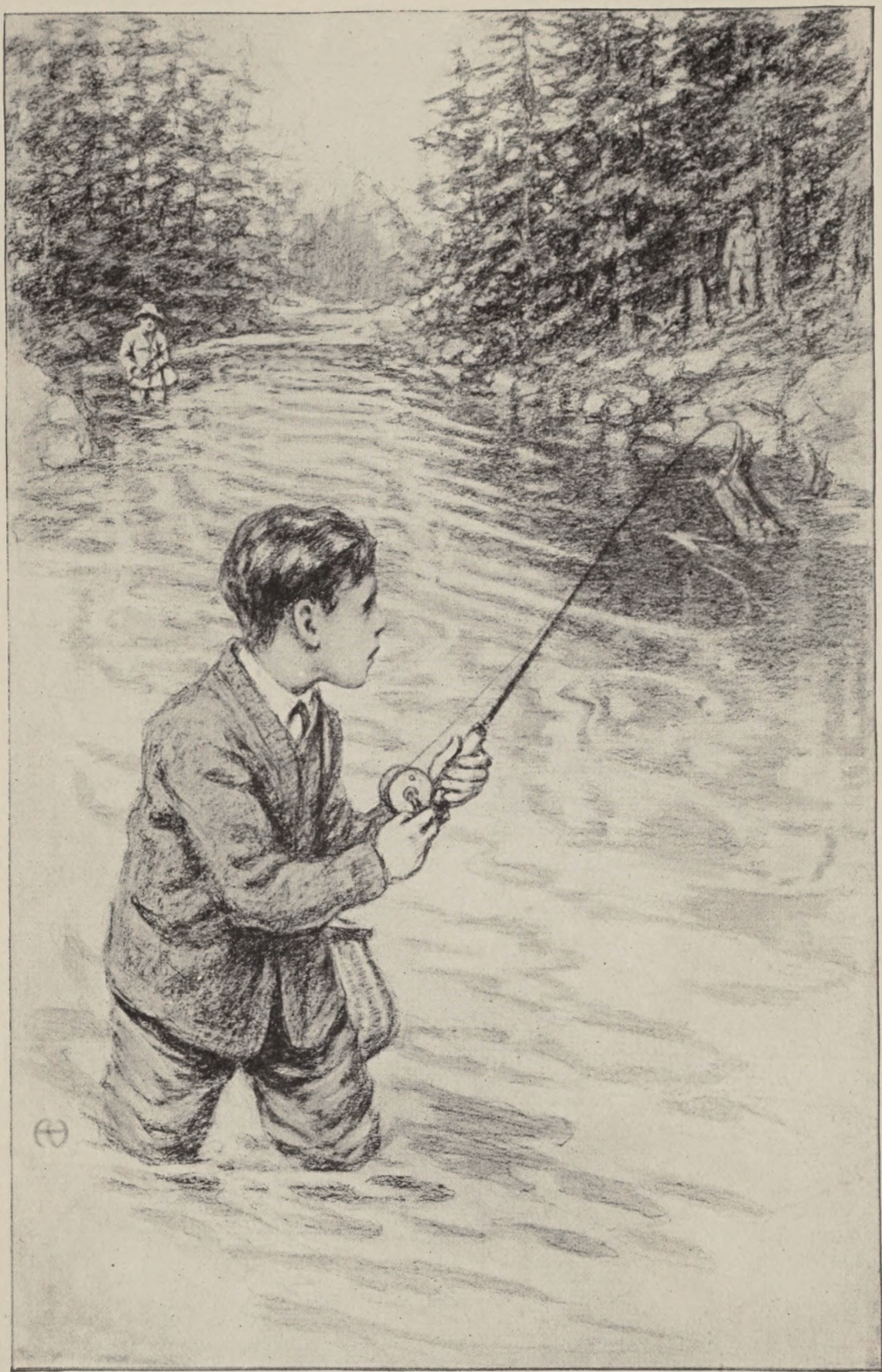
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EXAMINEE'S REPORT

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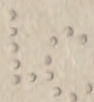
At last the fish gained the goal it had been seeking—the big stump. Bunty reeled in till there was a dangerous strain on the line. The fish did not budge.

Buntty Prescott

At Englishman's Camp

BY
Major M. J. Phillips

Illustrated by Emile Nelson



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To

Major Carlos H. Hanks and Family

True friends and faithful critics

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At last the fish gained the goal it had been seeking—the big stump. Bunty reeled in till there was a dangerous strain on the line.

Frontispiece ✓

The Fox Family visits Englishman's Camp.

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With an ear-splitting yell Redbird rushed at the stooping figure by the boat. Then he struck with all his might.

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Bunty looked up to see a deer standing quietly in the runway before him, so close that it seemed to be staring right into his eyes.

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BUNTY PRESCOTT AT ENGLISHMAN'S CAMP

CHAPTER I

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

It was a bright, warm day in June, 1897. From every school in the city of Detroit, Michigan, troops of happy boys and girls, books under arms, were going homeward. The long summer vacation, with its joys, was before them.

The girls, eagerly chattering, planned picnics, boat excursions and all-day visits to the beautiful parks which Detroit boasts. The boys talked busily of baseball games and trips to the bathing beaches at Belle Isle, where they could splash in the mighty river to their heart's content, watched over by the careful expert swimmers who are hired for that purpose by the city.

No lessons to get, no school bells to heed, no teachers to obey, for ten long, glorious weeks! They felt that they were on the eve of the happiest days of their lives. The soft, caressing air echoed to their shouts and songs. Ten weeks! Why, September seemed ages away!

Of all the chattering, care-free scores that came tumbling out of the handsome Forest Avenue

School, in the eastern part of the city, one boy alone seemed untouched by the general light-heartedness. While the others skipped and jostled each other, he walked slowly and sedately along. They carried their books easily and carelessly; he clung to his with a certain weariness, as though the weight were almost too great for him.

Their faces were flushed pink by the warm sun and their own frolicking, and were round and firm with health. His face was thin and drawn. It was also very pale, except on each cheek bone, where there was a bright red spot. His eyes seemed different, too, from those of his companions, for they were fixed and glassy. His arms and legs were slender and bony.

The boy was Hugo Prescott, or "Bunty," as he was more often called, both by his father and his boy chums. He was the son of Professor Joseph Prescott, principal of the Forest Avenue School, and was about ten years of age. They lived in a pretty little cottage two blocks from the school-building. Yet slight as the distance was, Bunty felt that he could barely drag himself this last day of school to his home. The sigh with which he dropped into a chair on the vine-shaded front porch had more of weakness than relief in it.

Professor Prescott, his duties over for the school year, except for the commencement exer-

cises that evening, followed his son a few moments later. He was a tall young man with curly brown hair and kindly blue eyes. He was regarded as one of the best teachers in the city. With his own pupils he was very popular, for though he was firm and just he was also tactful.

The boys of the Forest Avenue School boasted to those from other schools about their principal. Mr. Prescott had been a famous athlete at the University of Michigan. He had played third base on the baseball team, and also had won his Varsity "M" as tackle on the football eleven, and distance runner on the track team.

Better yet, in their estimation, he was a soldier, for he commanded a company in the Michigan National Guard. Sometimes they saw young men draw themselves up stiffly and salute Mr. Prescott when they met him. This salute was made by raising the forearm, the fingers extended and joined, until the first finger touched the brim of the hat or cap. If the young man passed on Mr. Prescott's right, he saluted with his left hand, being careful to bring up the hand to the brim just over the left eye.

If he passed on Mr. Prescott's left, the salute was made with the right hand, which touched the hat opposite the right eye. These young men called the principal "Captain." In reply, he spoke their

last names or addressed them as "Corporal" or "Sergeant." The latter title, as he pronounced it, sounded as if it were spelled s-a-r-g-e-n-t.

Sometimes the principal would stop and talk to the young men. The students noted that on these occasions the young men kept their heels together and their hands close to their sides. Billy Anderson, one of Bunty's friends, was telling his grandfather about it one day.

He knew Grandpa Anderson would be interested, since he was a veteran of the Civil War, and belonged to Detroit Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. Grandpa was interested, for he nodded approvingly and said: "My boy, when you get old enough, I want you to join Captain Prescott's company. He has the best-drilled and best-disciplined company of militia in the city."

Mr. Prescott's military training was suggested now by the erectness of his head and the squareness of his shoulders as he turned in at his own gate. He was going on into the house, not noticing that his son was seated in an angle of the porch, but a dry, gasping cough from Hugo caused him to turn suddenly.

With deep concern in his face he seated himself in a chair beside the lad. "Why, old man," he said, "what is the matter?"

Though father and son, they were chums as

well, and Mr. Prescott spoke as if to a man of his own age, or as if he were a boy himself.

Despite his pinched little face, Bunty was much like his father. He had the same curly hair and steady blue eyes. His wan smile, which he tried manfully to make brave, also reminded one of Mr. Prescott.

“Nothing, daddy,” he replied, even as the hacking cough burst forth again before he could stop it.

“You’ve never got over that cold you had last spring,” said the father with conviction. “And I’ve been too busy at school to notice that my old partner was feeling a little off. But we’ll go to Dr. McFarland after dinner; he’ll fix us up.” He laid an arm about his son’s shoulders as they went into the house together.

Bunty’s mother had been dead from the time he was a baby, and the household consisted of father and son, Mr. Prescott’s mother and a maid. Because of grandma’s fostering care, Bunty had scarcely noticed the absence of a mother’s love.

Grandma Prescott presented a picture much different from the grandmas of most boys and girls. There was scarcely a gray thread in her glossy brown hair, and her laugh was as merry as that of a woman half her age. Most grandmas are knitting during their spare time—or so at least it seems from what we have seen and heard.

But instead of knitting, Grandma Prescott played duets on the piano with Bunty, and often went downtown or to Palmer Park with him. She was, next to daddy, thought Bunty, the best comrade in the world.

Now her son, leaving Bunty in the library, where he had listlessly picked up a book, sought her in the kitchen, where she was assisting the maid. It was eleven o'clock and nearly dinner time.

"Mother," said Mr. Prescott anxiously, "have you noticed anything wrong with Hugo?"

Grandma nodded gravely. "Yes; he has never recovered from that cold. I've tried to doctor him, too. But he's been growing too fast, and he can't get his strength back."

Mr. Prescott's expression showed that he agreed with her words. "And it's been such a job preparing for commencement that I hadn't noticed how ill he was looking," he said. "But we mustn't neglect him any longer. I'll take him over to Dr. McFarland's this very afternoon."

An appointment was made by telephone, and two hours later Mr. Prescott and his son were in the cool, dark private office of the doctor. Bunty found it pleasant and restful, with its sober-tinted walls and faint scent of drugs.

The doctor, a big, pleasant man with twinkling

gray eyes, tapped Bunty's chest and back with a little hammer. Then he listened by means of a black tube, the divided ends of which he placed in his ears, while the other end he held against the boy's body. He counted the pulse in the hot, slender wrist. Then he motioned Bunty to resume his coat and be seated.

"Now, Captain," he said, turning to Mr. Prescott, "we'll have a council of war."

"At your service, Doctor," was the reply. "Shall Hugo retire?"

"Oh, no. He may stay. We may want to consult him, you see."

After he had put away his instruments he continued: "Hugo's had too much of the city. There's been that nasty cough, and he's studied pretty hard. His rapid growth has sapped his strength somewhat. That's what makes the cough hang on."

"You might have come sooner, but you're not too late. He'll pick up strength fast now. But to be really safe, I believe we ought to send him away."

"Whatever you say, Doctor," replied Mr. Prescott.

"And there ought to be some one with him to see he's properly taken care of. He shouldn't come back to Detroit until next spring, anyway. I

think he should have a year to get fat and saucy in."

"A year?" Mr. Prescott looked his surprise. "Where should he go, Doctor?"

"Well," said Dr. McFarland slowly, "he needs dry air and pure air. It's too moist and at the same time too dusty here. He needs the scent of the balsam and the pine."

"Out West?" queried Mr. Prescott.

"I didn't have the West in mind, exactly. You can stay nearer home and do better. I was thinking of the place I go hunting every fall. I go up to our cabin near Grayling, in Crawford county, to hunt deer. It's on the Au Sable River. The air is not more healing or purer anywhere. Then there's good hunting and fishing. I don't suppose you could give up school work for a year?"

"I can do anything you want me to do," replied Mr. Prescott. "I have money enough for the three of us, mother, Hugo and I, if I never open another schoolbook. So give us your orders."

Dr. McFarland smiled and struck his knee with his hand. "Good!" he cried. "That's great luck. I order you to Au Sable!

"You can take a tent along and sleep in it until winter. Then you can move into our cabin. How would you like that, Hugo?"

The boy jumped from his chair, his pale face

flushed and his eyes shining. "Oh, daddy!" he cried, "will you — can we? I've always wanted to hunt and fish and shoot! Please, please, let's go!"

Both the doctor and Mr. Prescott smiled at his enthusiasm. "Well, that settles it," said the latter. "It's northward for the two of us. You're kind about offering that cottage, Doctor."

"Oh, there are conditions," replied the doctor. "You must have plenty of wood stored up, and a great, big supper of pancakes and bacon and coffee for Judge Bancroft and Mr. Conway and me when we come in November. That lets us out of the only disagreeable thing about hunting: making camp the first night."

"You shall have your flapjacks and the rest of it," promised Mr. Prescott. "Just let me know when you are coming."

"I was planning to take Hugo to camp at Island Lake this summer," he continued; "for he has never seen an encampment of state troops. But this will be better. The sooner we start for the north the better, Doctor?"

"The sooner the better," echoed Dr. McFarland. "Drop in this evening and we'll go over the matter together."

"Gladly, Doctor. I shall want some advice on what supplies to take."

The doctor laughed and gave Mr. Prescott a

little push. "Go on with you! A seasoned campaigner like yourself asking an amateur like me what to take! He's joking, eh, Hugo?" and he winked jovially at the boy.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING FOR THE JOURNEY

The week that followed was a busy one. There were several conferences with the doctor, who made up a tonic for Bunty. He was also persuaded to help Mr. Prescott prepare the outfit for a long sojourn in the woods. The captain convinced his friend that living as a soldier in camp was considerably different from being cast practically on one's own resources in a tangled wilderness a dozen miles from a railroad.

There were guns and blankets and fishing tackle and canned goods to buy, not to mention suitable clothing.

Mr. Prescott, after pondering on the clothing question for some time, purchased two outfits almost identically alike for Bunty and himself. There were two weights of good woolen underwear, dark blue flannel shirts, canvas leggings, corduroy hunting suits, the breeches fitted with eyelets and laces from the knees down. This permitted them to be laced tightly about the lower leg, keeping out cold and snow.

There were light but stout shoes for good weather. High, russet, laced boots, reaching quite to the knee, waterproofed and with heavy soles, were secured for winter wear. Hip boots for wading, and a sailor's suit of oiled canvas jacket and overalls, not to mention a flannel-lined sou'wester oiled hat with flannel earlaps which, tied snugly under the chin, would enable them to laugh at rainy weather.

Yards and yards of mosquito netting, for the discouragement of ambitious northern Michigan insects, were secured. Then there were snowshoes, very necessary for navigating the snows of the jack pine wilderness in winter, and fur caps to protect the ears from the calm, biting cold. Gaudily colored Mackinaw jackets which fell to the middle of the thigh and were bound about the waist by a heavy woolen scarf, and heavy socks, mittens, and fur-lined gloves completed the list of clothing purchases.

Mr. Prescott secured two tents for summer use. They were nine-by-nines, which is the army description of an officer's tent. The figures refer to the ground dimensions of the tent. He also bought the poles and pins that went with the tents, and four "flies" besides. A fly is a tent without walls—merely the roof canvas—and is generally used as a temporary shelter from the sun and rain.

Two "pup tents" were also on his list. A pup tent is a small shelter not over three feet high and about six feet long. In the army and National Guard, when the troops are on field marches that necessitate remaining away from camp overnight, every two soldiers have a pup tent complete between them.

Each carries half the canvas, which overlaps and buttons together at the top and down the rear, thus keeping out the wind and rain very effectively. Each soldier also carries one of the poles, which are each made in two sections. The poles when required for use are fitted together by means of a tin socket which covers one end of the upper half.

The front of each little tent is open, but there are buttons and buttonholes along the edges. By means of these, two complete shelter tents, as they are officially known, can be buttoned together at the open ends. This completes one long, low, weather-proof tent without an opening in it anywhere. It will accommodate four soldiers at a pinch, each pair lying feet to feet.

His soldierly training impelled Mr. Prescott to get two ponchos also. A poncho is a rubber blanket with a slit in the center, through which the head is inserted. The slit then buttons snugly about the neck, and the poncho falls below the knees on all

sides, furnishing practical protection from the elements for either mounted or foot soldiers.

When a soldier prepares to go on the march, he lays the rubber blanket, inside up, on the ground: On this he spreads his half of the shelter tent; then comes the woolen blanket, and on top of that he arranges the two halves of his tent pole and the pins that go with the tent.

Then he starts at one of the long sides and rolls everything into a neat roll. With the shelter tent rope he ties this roll firmly at either end, so pins or pole cannot drop out, and brings the two ends together with a final turn.

When all is ready he slips this magnet-shaped bundle over his left shoulder and marches away. One half of the pup tent pole is in either end, and stiffens the bundle, while the part of the roll on his shoulder is soft and pliable. Thus his "house" is on his back, snugly encased in a rubber overcoat to keep it dry.

Captain Prescott had often taught the men of his company how to make a "blanket-roll," as it is called, and he planned to use his knowledge of carrying and setting up a pup tent on jaunts when Bunty had regained his strength. He reveled in these and similar purchases, for the prospect of a year in the pine barrens had become as delightful to him as to Bunty. He had always been fond of

an outdoor life, the more so because teaching, for which he had an especial gift, kept him inside so much. Now his longing for the rifle, the rod and the white canvas overhead was about to be gratified.

CHAPTER III

NORTHWARD, HO!

The days that ensued before they left were exciting and delightful ones for Bunty. Because of his slight strength, it was decided that he should stay at home, as the trips downtown to make the many purchases, would be too tiring. So he sat on the front porch and acted as a reception committee.

Usually delivery wagons made the journeys to him, but occasionally an errand boy came staggering under a parcel as large as himself. Bunty opened everything as it came, to feast his eyes upon a most fascinating array of new possessions.

He tried on the new and picturesque clothing every day, erected the pup tents in the back yard, and arranged about them the camp utensils. All his boy friends found the articles as engrossing as did he. Baseball and swimming trips were neglected for the fascinating new sport of "playing camping out."

Billy Anderson was master of ceremonies. He was trapper, Indian chief, guide and deer hunter in such rapid succession that his comrades were

forced to ask every few minutes just what character was then at the fore.

Terrible battles with redskins were fought in the back yard, from the currant bushes on the west side to the hedge along Mr. Brooks' property on the east side.

The hedge, which was about thirty inches high, was also the great pine log over which the deer leaped to their doom. Billy, of course, was the wonderful lone hunter.

Armed with an air gun, he lay in ambush behind the cabbage patch, and as each boy vaulted the hedge, he cried "bang!" loudly and pulled the trigger. Buntz had been cautioned not to take violent exercise, but he sat on the grass plot near by and enjoyed the sport as much as anybody.

The first day all the "deer" fell victims to Billy's unerring aim and rolled in the grass, excepting Bobby Smith. When he came sailing over the hedge, and the concealed marksman had fired upon him, Bobby simply kicked up his heels and kept on running.

A whispered conference between Billy, Buntz and the stricken deer followed hard on this act of treason. Bobby came back after a while to discover that he was an Indian who had disobeyed the rules of the tribe, and that he was sentenced to the "silence punishment."

No member of the tribe dared speak to him, under penalty of a similar fate. Ten minutes of being a tribal outcast cured Bobby, and the Indians, in the flicker of an eye, became deer again. Thereafter Bobby writhed most artistically on the grass when the deer slayer turned the repeating rifle upon him.

A load of lumber was delivered in the back yard, and with it came a carpenter and his basket of tools. As most ordinary trunks were not large enough for the camp supplies, and would be damaged by rough usage, Mr. Prescott decided to have suitable heavy chests built. They were made of stout lumber, with good strong hinges and locks. Everything went into them excepting the tent poles of the nine-by-nines, which were tied together with bits of wire for the trip north.

Into one chest went books and magazines in plenty, likewise a number of works in which Mr. Prescott was pursuing a course of study, his military treatises and Buntty's own schoolbooks.

The boy was all attention at that. "Why, daddy, we won't need those, will we?" he queried with wide eyes, pointing to his books.

His father smiled. "Indeed we will, old man," was the reply. "Both of us are going to school just the same—but it will be in our own tent or cabin. I will keep up my special work, and every

day you will recite your lessons. Then, a year from next September, you see, you can step in with your own class."

"Oh," said Bunty rather doubtfully. He had quite lost sight of such a possibility as being required to keep up his studies.

At last everything was in readiness. Bunty's Uncle Fred and Aunt Nellie had moved into the Forest Avenue home. They were to live with Grandma Prescott during the absence of the young health-seeker and his father in the north. The consultation with Dr. McFarland had been held on Thursday; the following Thursday was the day set for the start.

Wednesday night Bunty's schoolmates came to give him a formal farewell. There were about twenty-five of them, the girls in neat summer frocks, and the boys uncomfortable at having to wear jackets again after a week of freedom from them.

The prospect of a change and the week of rest had caused Bunty to improve. He was feeling quite strong and he entered into the games heartily. But he soon saw that there was something going on to which he was not a party. Billy Anderson spent most of his time in the center of different groups on the porch, evidently exhibiting something to them.

Once Bunty came onto Billy and his sister Ethel near the hall staircase, and Billy was evidently reciting something. His sister broke in on his singsong voice: "No, no, Billy; you've left out 'auspicious'."

"Well," he complained, "why didn't you put an easier word there? I can't ever remember that!"

"You *must* remember it," Ethel replied. Then they saw Bunty and ran away laughing.

After the games had all been played out, and the ice cream and cake had been eaten, Bunty discovered what the secret was. With much crowding and giggling the guests grouped themselves in the parlor. They formed a circle about him and Billy Anderson.

Billy waited until the noise had ceased, took a complacent look over the assemblage, and began in the singsong voice he had used in the hall:

"Friend Hugo: We are all glad to be here to-night. I am pleased to be one of the twenty-seven guests——"

"Twenty-five, Billy," interrupted Ethel, primly.

Billy gave her a crushing look. "I counted 'em; there's twenty-seven," he said. Then he began again:

"Friend Hugo: We are all glad to be here to-night. I am pleased to be one of the twenty-

seven guests——” he paused to look defiantly at his sister, who shook her head, and murmured “twenty-five” under her breath. Then he went on again: “——twenty-seven guests who have gathered here on this — this — aw — er — on this——”

He glanced appealingly at Ethel who, miffed at the dispute over the number, would not meet his eye. Finally, when a titter ran around the circle, she asked: “Twenty-five or twenty-seven?”

“Twenty-five,” agreed Billy humbly.

“‘Auspicious,’ then,” said Ethel.

So Billy went clear back again: “Friend Hugo: We are all glad to be here to-night. I am pleased to be one of the twenty-sev—I mean twenty-five, guests who have gathered here on this aw—aw—auspicious occasion, to give you a to—a, ah— a—to——”

“Which toe?” put in Bobby Smith.

“Token,” pronounced Ethel.

“Token of appreciation——”

“‘*Hearty* appreciation,’ ” corrected Ethel, impatiently.

“Oh, say your own old speech!” cried Billy, as he reached into his pocket and drew forth a brown leather case, which he handed to Hugo. “What I wanted to say, Bunty, is that we got you a watch to take up north, and we hope you’ll have a

good time and won't forget to write to us. Don't we, fellows?"

The response was loud and prompt. The girls refused to be ignored, despite Billy's "fellows," and answered as quickly as the boys.

The watch was a little beauty, with strong nickeled case, and heavy black hands and dial figures. It had a stout leather thong instead of a chain, which fact pleased Bunty immensely. Grandpa Anderson had picked it out at the request of the children. He chose it because it was much like the one he had carried through the war. "Good and stout, with no chain to catch on the bushes," he said; "and the kind of a dial you can tell time by in the dark. Just the thing for roughing it."

All the young people crowded around to admire it, except Ethel. She had seen the watch many times in the preceding three days. Besides, she had an appreciative audience to whom she recited the speech she had written for Billy: Grandma and Mr. Prescott and Bunty's uncle and aunt. They clapped their hands when she had finished, and assured her that the children had missed something when Billy forgot his lines.

The Prescott household was up bright and early Thursday morning. A truck was in the alley back of the house at seven o'clock, and Mr.

Prescott, assisted by the driver and Mr. Brooks, loaded the three big chests, the tent poles and a stout little steamer trunk aboard. The baggage was then carted to the Michigan Central station and sent out on a morning train for the north.

Mr. Prescott was too experienced a camper not to make sure that the baggage would reach the destination at least as soon as he did. He knew that delay was possible, especially as there was a transfer to be made and traffic was heavy.

The transfer occurred at Bay City, and hundreds of tourists were going to the northern lake resorts weekly, so it was a wise precaution to make due allowance for a congestion.

Everybody was very quiet, in the hope that Bunty would get an hour's extra sleep, in view of the long journey ahead of him. But he was up with the lark. Long before the baggage had gone he had eaten breakfast and was in his accustomed place on the porch.

Those who had attended the party the night before, and many others, came to say good-bye. A number stayed all day, only going home reluctantly at sundown.

Billy Anderson was master of ceremonies. On a sheet of paper, grimy from much fingering, he wrote the memento which each boy and girl wanted from the north.

“Read this list after you get settled in camp, Bunty,” he said. “And if there’s anything you can’t get, just say the supply is ’zausted, and it will be all right.”

“*Exhausted*, Billy,” corrected his sister.

“Of course I know you’ll make a speshul effort to get the fellows what they want,” continued Billy, apparently ignoring the correction. “It don’t make so much difference about the girls!”

At half past eight that evening the carriage came for Mr. Prescott and Bunty. There were hurried good-byes to neighbors and to the members of the family remaining behind. Then they were whirled off to the station.

CHAPTER IV

REVEILLE IN THE JACK PINE COUNTRY

The great, brick, ivy-grown station was a scene of bustle and confusion when they arrived. Street cars came clanging and rumbling up to one side of it. Carriages and omnibuses were lined up along the curb on the other. A train had just arrived. The passengers, as they streamed out the broad doorways, were pounced on by the drivers, who shouted at the top of their voices invitations to ride.

Inside the station many people were moving restlessly to and fro under the glaring, sputtering arc lights. Some were seeking information; others were hurrying to trains; and here and there a little group waited for incoming friends.

Mr. Prescott had secured Pullman and railroad tickets during the day, so they were not delayed nor forced to become part of the impatient line which filed up to the brightly-lighted ticket window. Instead, they walked leisurely through the big room and to a door on the opposite side.

This door opened into a roofed shed, the front

of which was a high iron fence. Arc lights cast their white gleams here, too, and showed that iron turnstiles were set in the fence at regular intervals.

Mr. Prescott passed over his tickets to the nearest turnstile man, who punched a little hole in them and handed them back.

“Grayling?” he said. “Track eight, to your left.”

A tall colored porter, with teeth that shone in a smile, relieved Mr. Prescott of his traveling bag. “This way, sah,” he said. “Mackinaw sleepah is the second car. You have the stateroom, sah.”

He led the way along the carpeted aisle of the car to a little compartment at the upper end. In accordance with Mr. Prescott’s wishes, the stateroom was already “made up.” There were comfortable beds stretching down each side of the compartment. They were covered with snowy linen, and looked so clean and inviting that both father and son made haste to undress and roll in.

The door was closed and the curtains were down, so the little room was quite dark. For some moments Buntty lay contentedly listening to the scuffling of feet within and without the car, to occasional snatches of conversation, and to the testing of the air brakes of the train.

At last a loud voice said “Al-l-ll abo-o-oard!”

There was a clattering as the vestibules were closed. The wheels began turning slowly. Hurrah! They were off!

Gradually the train gathered speed. Electric street lights, in quick succession, threw narrow pencils of light into the stateroom from the sides of the curtains. Finally they left Detroit behind and were rushing swiftly through the country.

The whistle of the great locomotive occasionally sent forth its echoing roar of warning over wood and field. The monotonous "clickety-click, clickety-click!" of the wheels as they passed over the rail joints, became a soothing lullaby. Fainter and fainter sounded the whistle. The clicking sank to a pleasant, drowsy murmur. . . . Hugo slept.

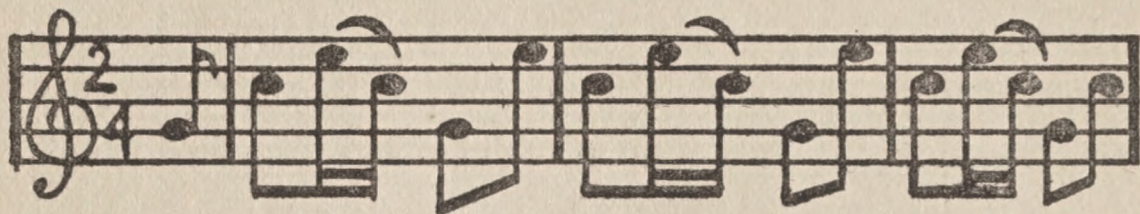
It seemed but a few moments before he was awakened by a knocking on the stateroom door. When it was not repeated, he drowsily supposed he had been mistaken in thinking it was meant for him, and he turned over for another nap.

But from the other couch came a clear, lilting whistle. It stirred him into complete wakefulness.

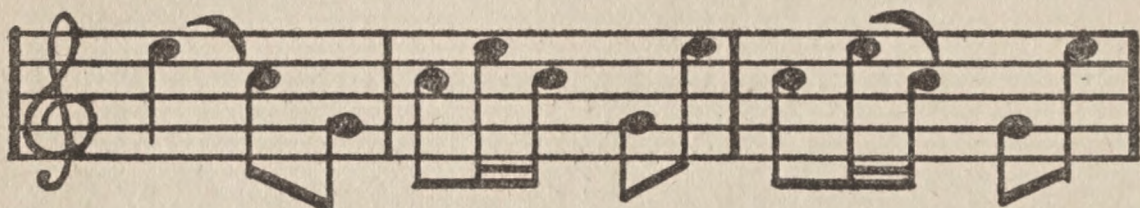
"Daddy, what is that tune?" he asked.

His father laughed. "It isn't a tune," he said. "It's the bugle call which awakens the soldiers each morning. It's called *Reveille*. The boys have made up a little verse that goes with it."

“What is the verse?” queried Hugo, eagerly.
So his father sang:

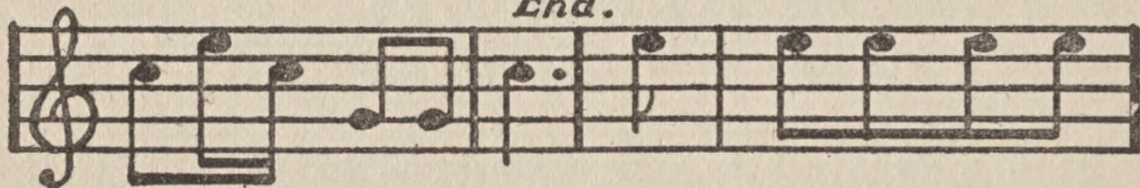


I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em in the

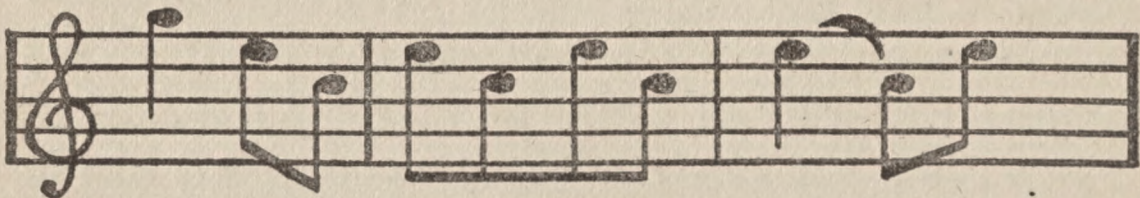


morning; I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up I

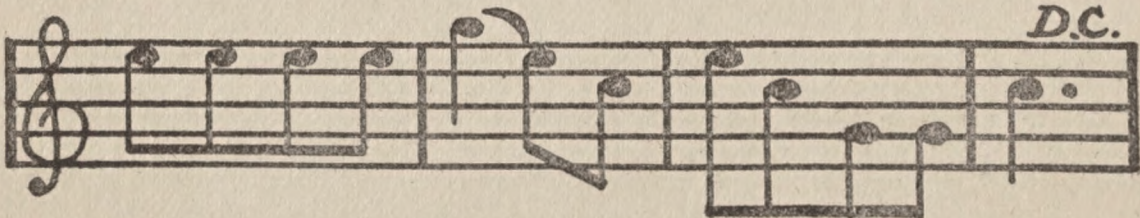
End.



can't get 'em up at all. The corpr'l's worse'n the



private the sergeant's worse'n the corp'ral, the



captain's worse'n the sergeant, 'n'the colonel's worst of all!

“Why, daddy, I think that’s pretty cute!” said Bunty. “Sing it again, please.”

But his father shook him playfully. “It may be cute, but in the army it has a meaning, young man. And that meaning is ‘Get right up!’ Don’t you realize we’re getting near Grayling?”

“It seems as though we’d just gone to bed!” said Bunty in surprise.

“Which shows that you’re a great traveler,” responded Mr. Prescott. “You never stirred all night, though we bumped and banged around, and stopped at a station every hour or so. At Bay City we laid over for two hours while they made up a new train to take us north. When they coupled onto this sleeper, the bump nearly tossed me out of my bunk.”

“I never heard a thing,” said Bunty, yawning heartily.

They were dressing as they talked, in their stout shoes, corduroy breeches and flannel shirts. Mr. Prescott looked at his watch, and Hugo, with a very businesslike air, drew his timepiece from the pocket of his shirt. It was three forty.

“Twenty minutes before we’re due in Grayling,” announced Mr. Prescott. “Get your comb and brush and come along to the toilet room. And,” he added, “be quiet, so you will not disturb the sleeping passengers.”

No one but the porter was astir. The berths on either side of the aisle were closely curtained and the lights overhead flickered dimly. The train shot around a long curve as Hugo and his father walked carefully, if unsteadily, to the rear of the car. The swaying motion threatened every moment to pitch them headlong into the berth of some sleeping passenger, but they made the trip without mishap.

As they entered the toilet room, Hugo uttered a hushed cry of delight. The curtains were up. Through the windows he caught his first glimpse of the jack pine country.

CHAPTER V

BUNTY'S FIRST INDIAN

The train was hurrying straight into the north, and Bunty looked out towards the east. A mile away was a line of low hills, running parallel with the track. They were covered with sparse, bushy vegetation, with jack pine, and with great pine stumps, scarred and blackened by many a fire. Here and there, like a lonesome sentinel, the stub of what was once a noble pine reared its splintered, branchless head forty, fifty or even sixty feet into the air.

The jack pine is the stunted second-growth pine. It is the mere ghost of the mighty expanse of forest which formerly covered the north country from Saginaw to the straits of Mackinac. Rarely do the little trees grow more than twenty feet in height, and most of them are but twelve to fifteen feet. A soil rendered light and unproductive by many fires is responsible for this dwarfed growth.

So fierce are these forest fires that the earth is not spared by the flames. The very fiber, the leaves, grass roots, all the rich materials which

go to make up the thick black muck of a new and fertile country, are destroyed.

On the hills Bunty occasionally noted gashes of varying size, light yellow in color. The meaning of these puzzled him until he looked close to the track. There were many other yellow patches which seemed to take wing in gauzy clouds as he looked. It was sand!

For scores and scores of miles the country was a vast sand pit. Hardy little bushes and jack pine sprang from the soil, it is true; in places there was even a sod, but underneath and everywhere was the sand—light, fine and clean as granulated sugar, ready to be stirred into restless motion by every breath of air.

Bunty's eyes feasted themselves on the expanse of country steadily unrolling before him. His gaze roamed from the hills which the hidden sun was beginning to gild with glorious light, over the rolling, monotonous plain, to the railroad itself. Without knowing it he was searching for some sign of settlement and civilization: A road, a house, even a shed. There was none; nothing but a dewy, vacant tract from which the tall, whispering pines had been ruthlessly cut away.

When this fact was borne in upon him he began looking more closely than ever—but for wild animals now. I think he was a little disappointed

that a deer did not spring into view beside the track and toss lordly antlers in defiance at the train.

So absorbing was this pastime of scanning the strange, empty country that the engine whistled its long, single blast—the signal that they were approaching a station—while he was still washing his face and hands. He dried them on the crisp little square towel which the porter handed him, and hurried out.

The air brakes hissed; the car wheels groaned and screeched beneath their grasp; the speed of the train was checked. With a hollow rumble they passed over a turbulent little river filled with logs, between grimy railroad buildings, over a street, and came to a stop. “Gra-a-aayling!” called the brakeman in the next car, as Bunty and his father stepped out into the vestibule.

The first thing that impressed him as he left the train and stretched himself on the depot platform was the splendid freshness of the air. It was cool, but not cold. Yet it seemed to penetrate his lungs with the same searching vigor that the air did on very cold days in Detroit.

He could not get enough of it. Throwing back his head, he took in great draughts. At the same time he was conscious of a pleasant odor, slightly bitter, which was everywhere, like the air itself;

it was the scent of the balsam and the pine, a scent which he was to know and love within the next few months.

“Mr. Prescott?” They turned to confront the man who had spoken. He was evidently a resident of the country. He wore a battered, shapeless slouch hat, and his trousers were tucked into a pair of tall leather boots. Every garment he wore seemed faded and patched.

He had shrewd, twinkling brown eyes and hair which fell almost to his shoulders. His upper lip was clean shaven, but thick whiskers a half-dozen inches in length projected from his chin. Hair and beard, formerly very dark, were beginning to turn gray. He was a man of medium size, but powerfully made. His shoulders were somewhat stooped and his arms were long and sinewy.

“Good morning,” responded Mr. Prescott, to his greeting; “Mr. Fox, I presume.”

“Wa-al, *Si* Fox,” conceded the stranger. “Folks don’t usually put on the ‘Mister.’ ”

“You got my letter?”

“Ya-as; but I didn’t git your outfit,” replied Fox. “The baggage checks come all right in a railroad envelope; but I met both the afternoon trains and didn’t see a sign of camp stuff.”

“Why, there are our chests now, daddy!” cried Buntty in great delight.

He pointed to the forward part of the train. Sure enough, the baggageman was unloading their belongings onto a truck.

The frown of perplexity cleared from Mr. Prescott's face. "Good enough!" he said. "They missed connections at Bay City, after all. Lucky I sent them on ahead."

"Wa-al, I'll throw 'em right on. There's my team," said Fox, pointing to a pair of sturdy little horses hitched to a wide-tired wagon. "Want me to get anything to take out, Mr. Prescott?"

"Yes; enough two-by-four scantling and lumber to make floors for two nine-by-nine tents," replied the teacher. "We'll get breakfast in the lunch room here, and meet you up street."

Then Buntty saw his first "real" Indian. At Wild West shows, of course, they had ridden in the parade. Inside the tents he had watched them attack the wagon train with sham ferocity.

But they were only "play-Indians." They did those things for money. They were merely actors, no different from the singers and jugglers one saw in the theaters. There was no glamour and mystery about them.

Si Fox turned to the line of loungers who were standing by the side of the station, just where the first rays of the rising sun would strike them. "Hey, you Redbird!" he called sharply.

Bunty pricked up his ears at the picturesque name. One of the men slowly disengaged his shoulders from the side of the gaunt, wooden depot and glided noiselessly forward.

He had a slouch hat on, too, one that long wear had caused to droop about his face. A red flannel shirt, open at the neck, may have been donned in honor of his name; but his cheap "store" trousers were a sad disappointment to Bunty. Feather-trimmed buckskin ones belonged with a shirt like that. Anyhow, Redbird wore moccasins, prettily fringed and beaded. All in all, he was more striking and picturesque in appearance than his white companions.

It was the first time Bunty had ever been quite close to an Indian, and he made the most of his opportunity to look well at the young man. He noted that the latter's color was a clear light brown, with almost a sheen to it. That explained why the red men were called "copper-colored." Redbird was almost exactly the shade of well-polished copper.

His eyes, rather small, were intensely black. His cheek bones were high, and his hair long, black and straight. Hugo noticed that he toed in so decidedly that his trail in the snow would probably show one footprint exactly behind the other. A white man's trail, of course, shows the toes

turned well out, and the heels some inches from being in line.

"Redbird," said Fox, when the Indian had joined the group, "I want you help me two—three days."

From reading Indian stories, Bunty supposed that an Indian's favorite expression was "Ugh!" When he heard the red man speak for the first time, he noted that the word did not express the sound exactly. Redbird said something that sounded more like "Un-nh-hh!" Then he added, in a deep though not unpleasant voice, "How much?"

"Fifty cents a day an' chuck," replied Fox.

"Un-nh-hh!" said Redbird again. "What do?"

"Wa-al, help me git this stuff out to Englishman's Camp on the north branch of the Au Sable," said Fox; "then build a new barn."

"Not enough!" said Redbird, decidedly. "Dollar an' chuck. No cheap!"

"I'll pay you seventy-five cents a day," said Fox.

For answer the Indian grunted, shrugged his shoulders, and turning on his heel, walked as noiselessly as he had come, back to the wall.

Fox grinned at the action, which he evidently expected, for he said: "Wa-al, all right, Injun. Come on."

Bunty looked up from the little scene to find his father smiling indulgently at him. "Well, old man," said Mr. Prescott, "would you rather hear a bargain than eat breakfast? Come along; I'm starving."

Considering the impassive face of the Indian, a thing most astonishing happened then. Redbird prodded the boy jovially in the ribs with his thumb. "Young chief heap pale," he said; "woods, he fix 'um. Soon red like Injun—huh?" and he chuckled silently.

The loungers, Mr. Fox—even his father—burst into roars of laughter at the look of blank surprise on the boy's face. The Indian's eyes were lost in a mass of merry wrinkles, and he shook noiselessly with mirth.

Bunty's former notion of Indians as grim, scalping, bloodthirsty demons promptly faded away. "Say, Redbird," he said eagerly, "where can I get a bow and arrow?"

"Redbird make one, mebbe. Huh!" And he winked as he followed Fox to the loaded truck.

Bunty's heart beat happily as he went into the lunch room with his father. He felt that he had already made a friend and that friend an Indian, in this delightful north country.

CHAPTER VI

OFF TO ENGLISHMAN'S CAMP

Never had bacon and eggs, coffee and toast tasted so good. The keen, pure air of the north had given Bunty a ravenous appetite. Mr. Prescott smiled with satisfaction at the businesslike way in which his son had cleaned up the thick white plate.

After buying a lunch to eat on the way to camp, they went out onto the main street. The little town lay before them. The wide thoroughfare, deep with discolored sand, stretched away towards the newly-risen sun. On each side of it were low, wooden store buildings, most of them unpainted and of but one story. Two or three tiny church spires pierced the perfect blue of the sky.

Behind them as they stood was a network of tracks, several puffing engines and a big roundhouse. Grayling is the starting point of two branch railroads which tap the districts where pine still stands. Many railroad men live in the town, and surplus engines and cars are kept there.

Fox and Redbird secured the lumber at a mill just south of town, and were now awaiting them. Mr. Prescott purchased a crosscut saw, a keen new axe, a hammer and some nails. Besides, there was a package of candles. The articles were laid on the rough plank sidewalk in front of a little store, while the wagonload was rearranged.

The lumber, the saw and the tent poles were placed in the bottom of the box. Two of the chests were arranged crosswise on the lumber, which was even with the top of the box.

Then, with much puffing and grunting on the part of Fox, the Indian and several bystanders, the third chest was placed squarely on top of the rear one. The steamer trunk was strapped to the box behind.

On the forward chest Fox arranged the bundle of hay which he had brought along for his horses' dinner. He spread it out, cushionwise, and covered it with a blanket. When it had been arranged to his satisfaction he turned to Bunty. "Up with you, young chief," he said.

Bunty clambered onto the blanket and found his seat a very comfortable one. The others elected to walk. Fox "geed" his team out into the street, and they were off, the horses pulling sturdily at the heavily loaded wagon.

They headed east and soon left the stores

behind. Next came the residence portion. Many of the houses were surrounded with board fences that protected front yards which contained only heaps of yellow sand and a few discouraged wisps of grass. Pigs grunted companionably from wallows near the road; cattle roamed at will, munching the scanty herbage.

While some of the houses were unpainted, others, the homes of Danes and Swedes, were bright green, blue or yellow, with the window sashes and doors stained a vivid red. They were so neat and trim and quaint in appearance that they reminded Bunty of the gaudily-painted doll houses in the shop windows at Christmas time.

Here and there some prosperous lumbermen had erected handsome modern homes, surrounded by iron fences and carefully guarded though sickly looking shade trees. Bunty saw a cement walk leading to one such house. It had been built with much care and labor on the none too solid sand foundation.

At the end of the village the road swung to the north. Then it turned back to the east again, in a long, sweeping curve. After that, so often did it curve and wind through the scrub that Bunty soon lost all sense of direction, though he knew they must be going north or east.

The road dwindled from a well-marked high-

way to a mere track through the pines. Here and there it forked to right or left. These branching roads were identical in appearance with the one they followed. Apparently they were just as important.

A tenderfoot would have lost himself hopelessly in half an hour. But Fox plodded on through the labyrinth without casting a glance at the diverging routes. Their own road soon became little more than a cow path, so narrow that the vegetation brushed the wagon on either side.

From his perch on the box, Bunty could look out over a considerable expanse of country. In every direction it was the same: a nodding sea of green jack pine tops, pierced by the dead, ash-colored stubs. Idly he compared them to needles of volcanic rock in this emerald ocean.

Neither person nor animal outside their own party was in sight anywhere. They met no one and passed no one.

Progress was slow, for the sand was deep and the horses sweated under the hot sun. There were frequent stops to let them rest. During such halts Redbird was off like a coursing hound. He did not seem to get tired. When Fox said "Whoa," and he and Mr. Prescott seated themselves by the roadside, the Indian parted the underbrush and disappeared.

So noiselessly did he go that Bunty, drowsing on his cushion, did not miss him the first two or three times until he was gone. Sometimes he rejoined them before the horses were started again; at other times he would step out into the narrow track as they came along, a quarter of a mile or more up the road.

He remembered Hugo on these little expeditions. Once he brought back two or three shy, pretty wood flowers which the boy fastened in his buttonhole. At another time he held up the branch of a shrub six or eight inches in length on which were little round berries, some green, some red and the remainder just verging into a deep purple.

"Eat 'um blue fella," said Redbird, and Hugo did so—to taste the first delicious huckleberries of the season.

Fox had planned to reach Englishman's Camp at noon. It was barely five when they started, and they had made two miles an hour since. But when they were within three miles of camp a mishap occurred. The wagon became bogged in a creek which crossed the road.

The ground about the creek was quite marshy. A "corduroy" road had been built through these marshy spots. First, two rows of saplings, placed end to end, had been laid along the wagon track. Then, crosswise, other saplings had been placed

side by side. This made a bumpy but serviceable highway.

Long service, however, had forced the poles used for stringers, deep into the mud, and the wheels went to the hub in the ooze at every turn. It was necessary to cut other saplings with the axe, and using stumps as fulcrums, pry the wheels out.

The worst bogging occurred on the edge of the stream. The horses stopped to drink eagerly of the cool water, despite Fox's urging. Down went the four wheels until the box was but a few inches above the surface. It took two hours of hard work to get out of that place.

Fortunately, the bed of the stream was hard and the horses had a good footing. When the wagon was finally brought back to the surface again, it was quite easy for them to splash through and reach firm ground on the other side.

By this time it was two o'clock, and everybody was tired and hungry. They made a temporary camp by the roadside, unhitched and fed the horses, and ate their own lunch. They drank water from a spring which bubbled out of the higher ground upstream from the road.

Redbird produced a sandwich and ate it. He refused the offers of more food, made him by Fox and Mr. Prescott. But when Bunty insisted that

his share was greater than he needed, the Indian gravely accepted some bread and butter and meat from his hands.

"Does young chief command?" he queried, with a twinkle in his black eyes.

"Yes, Redbird," said Bunty.

"Un-nh-hh!" he grunted, accepting; "young chief, he boss!"

They rested an hour and a half, and Bunty enjoyed a glorious nap. The Indian, with deft fingers, smoothed out a bed in the soft, warm sand, shaping a little mound for a pillow. Over this he spread a blanket so cunningly that there was not a wrinkle anywhere. The natural couch just seemed to fit the boy's tired body, and he promptly dozed off. He slept almost without moving until Fox arose to hook up the horses again.

The character of the country gradually changed after they had left the creek behind. The jack pine forest grew thin and park-like. Occasionally the way led past clumps of hardwood trees. The soil became less sandy, and sod replaced the coarse bushes and infrequent bunches of long, fern-like grass.

About five o'clock, as the afternoon sun was casting long shadows through the trees, they reached Englishman's Camp. They found it a natural plain, level and covered with luxurious

grass. They entered the glade from the west. At the eastern side of it, perhaps two hundred yards away, thick underbrush and tall trees marked the course of the Au Sable. They could hear, faintly, the murmur of its hurrying waters.

The clearing was almost circular in form. At its south edge, a stone's throw from the water, were the house and farm buildings, all of logs, of the "Englishman," Cornelius Pugh. At the opposite side of the clearing, on the north, where the encircling forest came down to the water, stood the cabin of Dr. McFarland and his friends.

Several cattle and horses grazed about the clearing. One was the bell-cow, and a deep-toned bell tinkled melodiously as she raised her head to gaze at the intruders.

"Well, son," said Mr. Prescott, as they paused a moment, "this is home. What do you think of it?"

Bunty clapped his hands with delight. "It's just grand, daddy! Don't let's ever go back," he said. The Indian laughed silently.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST NIGHT BY THE AU SABLE

The lumber and chests were unloaded at a spot indicated by Mr. Prescott, and Fox and Redbird drove away. "I only live two mile across country," said the settler, with a sweep of his arm to the north, "an' I'll be over to see ye once in a while."

"Me come too," said Redbird.

"Is that so, Injun?" inquired Fox, with apparent anger. "I hired ye to help build a barn, not go visitin'." But his smile and the way Redbird grinned back at him showed that they well understood each other, and that the Indian could visit them if he chose to do so.

Mr. Pugh, a tall, silent man with a bushy, blond beard, who had been apprised of their coming by a letter from Dr. McFarland, now came over to invite them to supper.

"The Englishman," as the settlers generally called him, was a famous hunter, trapper and fisherman. There were a half dozen cabins of fishing and hunting clubs within a mile, and he had been

hired by the owners as caretaker during the off-season. His home was on property which Dr. McFarland and his friends owned. They had purchased the glade and many acres surrounding it several years before.

Mrs. Pugh was almost as well-known a cook as her husband was sportsman. Bear meat, venison, trout, game birds in season, she boiled, fried, baked and roasted to perfection.

In fact, so indispensable was this worthy couple that in many an office and courtroom in Detroit and Chicago the eyes of busy capitalist and dignified judge would brighten at the name "Pugh." "Englishman's Camp" was a real haven of rest and recreation.

The Pugh house was one story high and built as solidly as a fort. It was of rough logs, chinked with mortar. There was a living room, a kitchen, a dining room and several bedrooms. Mrs. Pugh did her cooking on a fine range which Detroit campers had sent her as a present the previous Christmas. Mr. Prescott and Bunty found her to be a bustling, bird-like little woman, as truly hospitable as her husband, and much more talkative.

In the dining room and living room were great, open fireplaces which would each take in a log six feet long. Many a stirring tale of the woods

and streams was told about the leaping flames in those fireplaces.

During the deer season there was scarcely a night but that the floor of the living room was covered with sleeping forms, each man rolled in his blanket and with a bearskin rug for a mattress.

Buntz found the living room to be an absorbing museum of the chase. On the walls were thickly-clustered antlers, each pair loaded down with guns and fishing rods. Mr. Pugh had no less than nine rifles. They ranged in age from the old, long-barreled muzzle-loader with which as a young man he had hunted in the wilds of Canada, to the small, compact and much more deadly thirty caliber repeater which had been his but a few months. Shotguns rounded out the number of weapons to a baker's dozen, to say nothing of three revolvers suspended in their holsters.

On one wall, quite by itself, a magnificent trout was twisting its glistening body, as if in the act of leaping from the water in sheer gladness at being alive.

It was a record fish, the largest ever taken from the Au Sable. Mr. Pugh had studied its habits and angled for weeks in a great dark pool miles downstream before hooking it. Then the big, powerful fellow had fought for nearly two

hours before his silent conqueror had lifted him from the water. The skin had been skillfully removed, stuffed and varnished, and was the admiration of all who visited the cabin.

Around the sides of the room was a complete chain of photographs, showing fishing and hunting scenes, bits of the North's wild landscape, and likenesses of Mr. and Mrs. Pugh's friends. On the floor, glass-eyed bears with wicked, gleaming tusks glared back at the boy from glossy skins.

It was a delightful hour that Bunty spent in the big, square room before supper was announced. He never remembered afterwards what he ate at the long table with its white cloth. It was the first of many meals in that house—and they were all good! Besides, he was so sleepy that he could barely keep his eyes open. He slept that night from the moment he touched the bed—sound, healthy, refreshing sleep that coaxed him back many steps on the road to strength and vigor.

Hugo occupied a room on the south side of the house, and the bright sunlight streaming in awakened him next morning. He looked out to see his father weeding busily in the Pugh's vegetable garden.

"Daddy," he called out through the open window, "blow *Rev—Rev—*Oh, you know! That sol-

dier call about getting folks up in the morning.”

Mr. Prescott straightened himself up with a smile and whistled *Reveille* in a lively fashion.

“It’s pretty late for that,” he said, after he had sung the words too. “*Reveille* sounds at five o’clock, and here it is after seven. So hurry and dress; this company of soldiers has some tents to put up to-day.”

With such an inducement, it is needless to say that Bunty hurried, and a few minutes later was at the breakfast table. Mrs. Pugh, who had taken a decided fancy to the boy, partially on account of his wan cheeks, coaxed him to eat of the choicest food. Mr. Pugh, the silent, was evidently just back from a long tramp. He was wet to the knees with dew. He nodded to Mr. Prescott and gave Bunty a smile that admitted the boy to full comradeship without further formality.

When, a short time later, Mr. Prescott and Bunty were making their way across the glade to where their camp equipage had been piled the day before, the father outlined his plans.

“You know, Bunty, I had intended cooking our own meals,” he said. “But after that fine supper we had last night, I saw I could not compete with Mrs. Pugh. So I have made arrangements for us to take all our meals over there. Is that all right?”

"Yes, daddy. But," said Bunty, politely, "how do you know Mrs. Pugh can beat you? I just guess you're a *dreadful* good cook!"

Mr. Prescott laughed. "Thank you, son, for your faith," he replied. "I have cooked in camp some, but the result wasn't very good. It was all right so long as only I had to eat it.

"To-day we will establish camp and take a little walk along the river when all is snug. To-morrow is Sunday, and we will rest. But next week we are going to take up your education."

"Why, daddy," said Bunty, in dismay, "school is only just out! This is vacation, you know."

His father laughed again. "I didn't mean your book education, old man," he explained, "but your woods education. This summer you must be taught to shoot, to hunt, to fish and to swim. You should also learn how to take care of yourself, should you happen to get lost.

"And you must also get to understand that what a hunter kills, he kills for his own use. You must never kill for mere wanton pleasure. We must not take the life of any creature needlessly or wastefully. I don't want my son to grow up a game-hog."

"What is a game-hog, daddy?" queried the boy.

"Well, he's a man that goes out into the woods and kills everything that his gun can reach, re-

gardless of whether it is good for food, or whether he needs it for food. If he is fishing, he will catch more fish than he can carry.

“Remember, Hugo, that waste and selfishness are just as wrong in the woods as at home. I want to see you become a good sportsman, and a generous one.”

“I’ll try to remember, daddy,” said Bunty, seriously.

“We will have to work some, too,” resumed his father. “There’s wood to be cut for the winter—piles and piles of it. And Dr. McFarland told me their cabin was too small, so I’m going to pay our rent by building an addition to it for him.”

“Get Redbird to help you, daddy,” urged the boy, eagerly.

“I intend to. I made some inquiries about him last night of Mr. Pugh. He says the Indian is honest and trustworthy, and a pretty good carpenter as well.”

By this time they had arrived at the spot where the chests had been unloaded. “Let’s sit down on this box,” said Mr. Prescott, “and talk over where we’re going to put our tents. You know, this is almost as important a job as building a house. We’re going to live in those tents all summer, and we want the location to suit. Where do you think we should pitch them?”

CHAPTER VIII

PITCHING THE TENTS

“Well,” said Bunty, after a survey of the surroundings, “this would be all right, only we’re too far from the river.”

His father nodded. “I like to be near the water, too,” he said. “We could locate over there on the bank, which is good and high, so there is no danger of a flood. It would bring us closer to the cabin, too, and that is our base of supplies. Do you know another reason why it’s the best place?”

“I don’t believe I do, daddy,” replied Bunty.

“Because it is high. All this ground here seems level, but I always examine a possible camp ground with the thought, ‘Which way will the water go in case of rain?’ When you have that in mind, you can’t make the mistake of getting your tent in a low spot.

“Now,” he resumed, “in which direction do you want your front door, young man?”

“Looking that way,” replied Bunty promptly, as he pointed toward Pugh’s.

Mr. Prescott nodded again. "You have the true outdoors instinct—to get as much of the sun as possible. The sun is the best friend we have, and the best medicine made. The front door facing the south is good logic.

"Besides, we are facing somebody else's home; that seems more neighborly than if we turned our shoulder or our back to Mr. and Mrs. Pugh. But we've got to stake our tents more securely than if we faced the west."

"Why?" queried Bunty.

"The prevailing winds here are from the west," explained his father. "The rainstorms and the hard blows will come from that direction. We will present a big surface to the wind, you see. In front will be a fly; directly behind it will be our parlor tent; then will come the bedroom tent, and behind that our back door fly. With such a broadside as that, we must be sure that everything is shipshape in case of a squall."

"Where are you going to put the other two flies?"

"Over the parlor and the bedroom," was the reply. "They are made to fit snugly and will keep out the rain in case of a very heavy storm. With a fly over the tent, we don't need to be careful about touching it on a wet day."

"Careful about touching it?" echoed Hugo.

“Yes. After the rain has beaten on a tent with force for some time, it gets pretty thoroughly water-soaked. It will not leak unless you touch your finger to the wet roof, inside. But if you do, a little stream will follow it at once. That spot will continue to leak then until the rain is over.

“It is a favorite pastime at camp on a rainy day to find young soldiers asleep in their tents and then touch the canvas directly over their heads. Naturally, when the water trickles down into a fellow’s face he doesn’t sleep very long.”

“Tell me some more about soldiers, daddy,” urged Bunty.

“The place for camp stories,” said Mr. Prescott, getting off the big chest, “is around the camp fire. And as a camp fire is going to be an institution here, we’ll have plenty of time to talk evenings. Now—to arms!”

He unlocked the chest which contained the canvas, and drew forth the contents. Then he carried the tents and tent poles to the location chosen for the permanent camp, which was about fifty yards away.

There, while Bunty watched him attentively, he spread out one of the tents on the grass. Through a ventilator-hole—there are such holes, front and back, high up in the peak of each tent—he thrust the ridgepole. This was a stout piece of

twine, rounded on top, with a hole bored through each end. The holes in the ridgepole were directly opposite an eyelet in either end of the top seam of the tent.

The other two poles which formed the framework of the canvas house had each an iron rod projecting six inches from the top. Mr. Prescott inserted the iron rod through the hole in the ridgepole and the eyelet in the tent in front, and placed the other pole in a similar position at the rear. Then a fly was fitted over the tent to the rod by means of its eyelets.

The tent was now all ready to raise. With his axe, he drove four stakes in a square about the tent. To the stakes on the east side he fastened the corner ropes which lay uppermost.

“Brace your foot against the bottom of that, old man,” said Mr. Prescott, indicating the lower end of the front pole. “Then lift on the pole when I say the word.”

He took a similar position at the rear, and said, “Now.”

Up came the tent easily, until it was standing erect. The shifting of the poles held it upright until the other corner loops could be slipped over the stakes on the west side. There it stood, gaunt and wabbly, but secure enough for the time being.

“Forward—march!” commanded Mr. Prescott,

and shouldering the axe, military fashion, he marched off to the scrub with Bunty at his heels.

He cut an armful of stakes each about sixteen inches long and nearly as thick as his wrist. These were carried back to camp. There they were pointed by the axe and Mr. Prescott's big hunting knife, and notched deeply at one side near the top.

"These are our corner stakes," he explained. "With four of them on a tent it is pretty likely to stay up, no matter what the weather."

The tent poles were carefully aligned, so the tent would not have a "lop-sided" appearance, and would not wrinkle when finally staked down. Then the places of the four corner stakes were located.

"Bunty," said Mr. Prescott, pausing with axe suspended, all ready to drive the first one into the ground, "which way shall I slant the stakes—towards the tent or away from it?"

"Why, away from it, daddy, of course," replied Bunty, surprised that his father should ask such a question.

"I'm afraid your tent would come down in a hurry," smiled Mr. Prescott. "While stakes slanting away from the tent don't look to be wrong, they are wrong, most decidedly. Experience has taught that such stakes are soon worked loose by

the continual jerking of the ropes in a wind. Stakes slanting towards the tent, and at the same angle as the guy ropes fastened to them, are subjected to the least strain.

“Stakes set at an angle away from the tent are called ‘rooky-stakes’ by soldiers, because recruits, deceived by the look of the improperly driven stake, always drive them that way.

“But a rooky-stake is useful sometimes. Where one hasn’t big corner stakes, the proper thing is to drive two stakes at the proper angle about four inches apart, and then set a rooky-stake between them. A rope slipped over the outer stake, and then given a turn around the rooky-stake is pretty likely to hold, no matter how strong the wind.”

Thus chatting, Mr. Prescott worked away, and by noon the tents were all up, though there were several finishing touches still to be put on. Bunty was anxious to see it done, but the effects of the long journey from Detroit were beginning to show. He looked pale and tired.

So after dinner, when he had taken the tonic which Dr. McFarland had provided, it was decreed that he should take a nap. Mrs. Pugh piled two of the softest bearskins near the open front door of the living room, placed a pillow on the topmost, and led Bunty to his improvised bed.

It seemed almost worth while to spend part of

such a glorious day indoors if one could sleep on a bearskin as those mighty hunters of the north did. So Bunty curled up on his couch and gazed out at the big trees and the jack pines. They seemed to crowd forward to bend friendly looks upon him.

The murmur of the Au Sable sounded pleasantly in his ears. The odor of the balsam and the pine came to him in caressing waves of aromatic bittersweet. He slept.

CHAPTER IX

ALONG THE AU SABLE

It was three o'clock before Hugo awoke, much refreshed, and joined his father at the camp. Mr. Prescott had used the time to good advantage. The tents were up in a trim line. The floors had been laid in the "parlor" and "bedroom," and were covered with thick rugs.

The big chests had been emptied of their contents, and by the aid of Mr. Pugh's team and wagon had been hauled away and stored in the barn. The food supplies had been delivered to Mrs. Pugh. Other articles not needed for immediate use were packed in the cabin.

The camp presented a snug and homelike appearance. The folding canvas cots which had been brought along were now set up on opposite sides of the bedroom tent, and were piled with blankets. Several camp stools stood about under the fly.

Beneath the rear fly Mr. Prescott had evolved a washstand for each of them. The stands were simple affairs. Each consisted of three stakes

driven into the ground at such an angle that a washbasin rested firmly on top.

The tents were rolled to the eaves all around, to allow a free circulation of air. The eight tent poles stood in a straight line, like a file of soldiers, and the tents and flies fitted over the ridgepoles without a wrinkle. This showed that the tents had been erected in a workmanlike manner.

“Well, Bunty,” asked Mr. Prescott, when the boy had made a thorough inspection, “what do you think of it?”

The question was almost needless, since every line of his son’s face showed satisfaction. “Daddy,” cried the boy, “it’s just grand! I *know* I’m going to like it here!”

“That’s good, old man,” was the hearty reply; “this is your camp as well as mine. We are partners. And you are sure——”

“Sure, daddy, sure. Only,” he paused and hesitated, “don’t you think a year is a short time to take all this trouble for?”

Mr. Prescott laughed. “Why, old woodsman,” he said, “are you beginning already to dread getting back to civilization? Well, never mind; we can always come back again for the summer vacations.

“And now for our walk along the river.” With a good deal of anticipation, since the sound of its

waters had filled their ears invitingly since their arrival, father and son started out on a little journey of exploration upstream along the Au Sable.

Accustomed to the green, smooth banks of the Detroit River, and the placid flow of that mighty stream, Buntz found the Au Sable was a change, to say the least. He was amazed at the antics and appearance of this little brawler, hurrying through the lonesome barrens to join Lake Huron, miles and miles away. So varied and sinuous was its course that it did not appear to do anything twice or for a very long period.

Almost opposite their camp the river formed a pool fully fifty yards wide. There it rippled shallowly over sand and yellow stones. This place was a ford. The banks sloped gently, and the bed of the stream was firm beneath the feet of the horses. At most seasons of the year it was a "carry" or portage, since there was no water to float even a canoe with two men.

Near Pugh's, upstream from camp, the banks became narrow and precipitous. The stream was confined in a narrow channel and ran like a mill-race. The choppy little waves on its surface were capped with foam.

As they continued their walk the stream broadened again. Rocks stumps, and logs jutted from

its troubled surface. Eddies formed deep, black pools in whose shadows big trout lurked.

A kingfisher, in an attitude of deep meditation, peered patiently into the water from an overhanging stub. Woodpeckers drummed hollowly on the dead trees back in the wilderness. A red squirrel, disturbed by their footsteps, scolded ill-naturedly in a jack pine as he peered after them with bright eyes.

After a half mile of leisurely progress they sat down on a sunny rock to rest. Flies buzzed around them and zigzagged aimlessly over the surface of a backwater which lay cool and dim, almost at their feet.

"What are you thinking of, son?" asked Mr. Prescott, when they had been silent some minutes.

"How I'd like to see a deer!" was the prompt response.

"Well, they're quite common hereabouts," said his father. "Mr. Pugh says that at sunrise the other morning three of them, one a buck with great, wide antlers, came down to the east bank of the ford to drink.

"Mr. Pugh was on this side. They saw him after awhile, but weren't much afraid. They looked, sniffed, and then trotted quietly back into the scrub."

"Do you suppose Mr. Pugh will take us hunt-

ing with him when the season opens?" queried Bunty, instantly awake to the possibility.

"I shouldn't wonder. Why? Would you like to shoot a deer?"

"Indeed I would" cried the boy.

"Well, we must teach you to shoot first," said his father. "But how would you like to see a good, big trout?"

"I'd like to, daddy."

"I think, from some of the flickers I've noticed, there's one in that pool. If we sit perfectly quiet, he'll think we've gone away. Then he'll begin popping up for flies. It's getting along towards his suppertime."

They settled themselves more comfortably, and waited with all the patience a fisherman is supposed to have, for a sight of the big fish. But either he was not hungry, or he was wary. Several times they were sure they had seen a quickly-moving shadow in the dark water. There was even a ripple once where nose or tail projected a tiny bit above the surface. But that was all.

At last, when it was growing late, they were compelled to leave without a sight of the inhabitant of that particular pool. Nevertheless, their desire to see a big fellow in action was gratified.

Just above Pugh's, in a quiet place near the opposite shore, something cleaved the surface with

a rush that scattered drops of water like a fountain. The great body, glittering as though painted with many colors, went straight up for nearly two feet. Then the unlucky fly or bug had evidently been taken in by the traplike mouth. The trout turned in mid-air, came down with a lordly splash, and disappeared.

"A rainbow!" cried Mr. Prescott. "And he weighed four pounds if he weighed an ounce." Buntty had voiced his excitement and delight by a whoop which waked the echoes.

"While the rainbow trout is the larger," said Mr. Prescott, when the ripples from the fish's leap had died away and they had resumed their homeward walk, "the speckled trout is more popular with sportsmen because he is gamier. I should prefer that your first one should be a rainbow."

"Why, daddy?"

"Because a rainbow is easier to land," was the reply. "He is thicker through the shoulders, and quite a little heavier. He is also less of a fighter, a little slower, and lacks the resourcefulness of his cousin. The speckled trout often gets away from experienced fishermen."

"You see," continued Mr. Prescott, "a true sportsman believes in giving the fish a chance for his life. That is why we fish with very light rods and lines. The gear is so fragile that an attempt

to pull even a small speckled trout straight out of the water by main strength alone is useless. Something would break, even if the trout's mouth did not give way.

“So when you hook your trout, you must ‘play’ him until he becomes exhausted or gets away. When he ‘strikes,’ or takes the fly, give him the line for his first panic-stricken rush. But just the moment he stops, or comes dashing back, reel in—fast. If he has too much line, he will surely tangle it.

“When he finds he is securely hooked, he will dart back and forth. Sometimes he leaps clear of the water. He is like quicksilver. This desperate fight to be rid of the barb will try your strength and your wits to the utmost. It alone is what gives the fascination to trout fishing. You are putting yourself up against the courage and speed of this thoroughbred of the northern waters.

“As he begins to tire, he will sulk, lying close to some rock or log. Don't let him rest. Stir him up with sharp, quick jerks. When he responds, keep a strain on the line and reel in whenever you can, but cautiously. Don't pull too strongly at any time or he may get free, trailing part of your tackle after him.

“Always keep the tip of your rod raised a little. Then you have some spring to depend upon in

case of a sudden rush and a hard pull. With the tip down, there will be a dead, straight pull, and a light line cannot stand that.

“There is a ‘drag’ on our reels, intended to make the line pay out with some difficulty during the rush of a fish. This tends to tire him more quickly. Many experts disregard the drag, and put the pressure on with the thumb alone as the line unwinds.

“I don’t believe you had better try to work the drag until you are more experienced. Too many details confuse a fellow. Just let him go when he wants to go; reel him in when he stops; keep the tip of your rod up; and don’t try to heave him straight out of the water as though he were a ‘shiner.’ Do you think you can remember those points, old man?”

“I guess so, daddy,” said Bunty, who had been listening closely. “But how *do* you land him when he gives up?”

“I had quite forgotten that; you reel him in close and slip a dip net under him. Then, you see, if he is a big fellow the hook will not tear out. Often you can hold a fish in the water, but when he is lifted clear his mouth gives way—and there is the empty hook laughing at you.”

Bunty heaved a sigh of anticipation. “When can we go fishing, daddy?”

“Well,” replied his father, “this is Saturday; to-morrow is Sunday. Monday morning we’ll work a bit. So it’ll be Monday afternoon, son.”

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST CAMP FIRE

It had been a beautiful day. Long after supper the light still lingered, as if reluctant to go. In the high, clear air of the wilderness, a pale radiance, the afterglow of the departed sun, was diffused. This long, hushed twilight is one of the charming features of the northern summer.

But it faded out at last, and then they discerned that the Northern Lights had flung their banners to the sky. In a wide half-circle the soft blue velvet of the heavens was touched by quivering spears of purest white. Buntz gazed thoughtfully at the awe-inspiring display as they crossed the field from Pugh's.

The mystery and the peace of the scene took hold on his imagination. The peaceful sweep of the dusky, encircling wood; the soothing murmur of the Au Sable; their own tent glimmering faintly just ahead; and those shafts of trembling white fire above the tree tops—all were parts of this sweet, new life of the barrens.

Throwing back his head, as he had on the sta-

tion platform at Grayling, he breathed deeply of the healing, pungent air. New life was already quickening in his veins. The hacking cough (since coughing is partially a matter of habit) had become less frequent. The buoyant spring, under the stimulus of new scenes and new experiences, was returning to his step already. Mr. Prescott, with a father's quick eye, had noted the change and was glad.

"Daddy," said Bunty when they had reached the camp, "why don't we see those Northern Lights in Detroit?"

"Too many other lights, I imagine," replied Mr. Prescott, "for them to show up as plainly. The street arcs and the electric light towers, to say nothing of the lights from shop windows, create a glare beyond which it is hard to see. Our view is more restricted, too. Then the altitude is not so great down there."

"The altitude?" queried Bunty.

"Yes. Grayling is but a short distance from the highest point in lower Michigan. Within a few miles of us is the watershed. They say that four rivers have their sources there or close by, and each flows in a different direction—one to Saginaw Bay, one to the Straits of Mackinac, one to Lake Michigan and one to Lake Huron. So you see we are up in the world."

The night air was cool and almost sharp. Father and son slipped into their Mackinaws, and the gaudy jackets felt grateful to their shoulders. Then, while Bunty drew the camp chairs out from under the fly, Mr. Prescott set about building a fire.

There were plenty of odds and ends left from the making of the floor. He cut a little heap of shavings with his hunting knife. Around it, placed on end and slanting inward to a pyramid, were placed short pieces of boards and branches of dead pine.

“What a funny way to build a fire!” said Bunty, as his father touched a match to the shavings.

“Yes, but watch it,” was the reply.

The shavings blazed out freely, being protected from any chance breeze by the surrounding sticks. The sticks themselves soon caught the fire, too, and a cheerful camp fire was the result.

“That is the Indian way of building a fire,” said Mr. Prescott. “It is successful in all sorts of wind and weather. The standing sticks form a sort of chimney and create a steady draft. A fire made of kindlings laid flat has no protection against the elements and is hard to light.

“Now, Bunty,” he continued, “we are in the heart of the wilderness. Except for Fox’s, there

is no house nearer Englishman's Camp than Grayling. I am not counting the hunting and fishing clubs, for they are open but a few weeks of the year. In every other direction the distance is even greater to a house than it is to Grayling.

“If an inexperienced person is lost in these barrens, there is a chance of his dying of hunger and exposure even in summer. The danger is much greater at other seasons of the year.”

He went into the tent and returned with two small packets. “We must always be prepared for the chance of getting lost. Here is a waterproof packet containing matches, a fishline and some hooks. Always keep it in your pocket. If you are ever lost you will need it badly. Remember to keep it by you when you change your clothes. It may mean food and warmth some day.

“And here is something almost as important. It is a compass and a strap to fasten it on your wrist.” He took Bunty's left hand, and placed the brass-bound compass, similar in size and shape to a watch, upon it, face upward. Then he slipped the leather over it.

The strap widened in the center and contained a circular opening through which the face of the compass could be seen. The strap buckled snugly on the back of the wrist. The center portion of the leather was molded to fit closely about the

compass. There was no possibility of the useful little article's slipping out.

"It's like a watch hand hung in the middle," said Bunty as he turned his wrist gently and watched the needle swing back and forth.

"It is very delicately balanced," said his father. "You will notice that one end of it has a tiny red dot upon it. That end always points to the north and the opposite end to the south. When you want to discover where north really is, turn the compass until the letter 'N' is directly beneath the dot.

"All around the dial are other letters. N, E, S and W indicate north, east, south and west. The letters in lighter type represent subdivisions—north-northwest, northwest, west-northwest and so on. Now see if you can point east."

Bunty adjusted the compass and indicated east exactly. He underwent several other tests, until his father was satisfied that the boy understood the compass thoroughly.

"Always remember," said Mr. Prescott, "that the red dot means 'north' on your compass. On some instruments, the distinguishing mark points out the south. I have a lawyer friend who did a long day's work for nothing last summer because he forgot a thing like that.

"The mark on his compass indicated the north,

but he had mislaid the instrument and borrowed another. He came to northern Michigan to locate some land which had been described to him as lying eight miles directly north of a certain station. The sun was hidden, he was traveling through wilderness, and he did not know that he was walking away from the land until he had completed the eight miles.

“But when he failed to recognize the land by the description given him, he remembered that he had been cautioned that the mark on the needle showed the south. So he had a walk of sixteen miles through deep sand for nothing.”

“I suppose he was pretty surprised,” commented Bunty.

“And disgusted, too. He was an experienced woodsman, and had been tramping the barrens for years. So you see it is no disgrace for one of us to make a mistake.

“If you ever do get lost, old man, don’t get frightened. Keep your head and reason the thing out calmly. Sit down and fix in your mind the direction to camp or the nearest settlement. Then start carefully in that direction, consulting your compass every little way. If you have a gun, lay it down or lean it against a tree when you consult the compass.

“That is to keep the compass true,” continued

Mr. Prescott, answering Bunty's look of surprise. "Iron or steel too near the magnet is liable to influence it and cause it not to work right.

"The compass is magnetized. One end of the magnet points to the north pole, the other to the south pole. Keep other magnets away from it. That is one reason why it is better to have the compass on your wrist than in your pocket, where the steel of your knife might influence it."

"This living in the woods is a trade, isn't it, daddy?" said the boy.

"Indeed it is, son," smiled Mr. Prescott, "and it is a trade with lots of things to learn in it.

"If you are ever lost without your compass, bear in mind that moss grows on the north side of the trees. That will help you get your direction. To travel reasonably straight in the direction you want to go, take an extra step with your left foot every sixty steps."

"An extra step with my left foot every sixty steps! Are you joking, daddy?"

"Indeed I'm not! A person naturally takes a little longer step with the right foot than with the left. Unless he is aware of it, he will wander to the left in a great circle, and come back to his starting point. One extra step in sixty would about equalize this in your case.

"Remember that crows and robins are never

very far from human beings. If you reach a stream in your wanderings, stick to it. There is sure to be some one living near it. If it is a small stream, go down with the current. Your chances grow better as the stream gets larger. Follow a blazed trail, unless it is very old."

"What is a blazed trail?"

"A path through the woods, indicated by axemarks on the trees. The man who makes it chops off a piece of bark at about the height of his shoulder. These 'blazes,' as they are called, show the white wood beneath. It is easy to follow the trail from tree to tree. If the blaze is very, very old, it probably leads to an abandoned lumber camp. Otherwise, it will fetch you to a house or main road.

"If you are compelled to stay out all night, build a fire and lie on the leeward side of it, opposite from where the wind comes."

"A fellow would get all smoked up," objected Bunty.

"But he wouldn't be cold," replied the father; "and the main thing, son, is to keep warm."

He looked at his watch and gave a little whistle of astonishment. "After nine o'clock; I have been giving you a regular lecture on woodcraft."

"I liked it, daddy," replied Bunty earnestly; "it was better than a story."

“Then I’m going to quiz you, as they do at college, to see what you have remembered. Go ahead and tell me what you’d do if you were lost in the woods.”

Bunty obeyed, and proved conclusively that he had listened well. Mr. Prescott saw that he was able to care for himself in any ordinary emergency, if he but kept cool. “Some other time, old man,” said his father, after complimenting Bunty on his attention, “we will talk about it again. But the fire is almost out, and it’s bedtime.”

“May I wear my compass to bed, daddy?” queried Bunty as he rose.

CHAPTER XI

BUNTY MEETS THE FOXES

Bunty found that a slat about two feet long had been nailed upright to each corner of his cot and of his father's as well. Over these slats a mosquito netting formed a canopy which fell to the floor on all sides.

"What do you think of your cage, old man?" smiled Mr. Prescott.

"I think it's good, daddy," replied the boy. "Flies and things can't come in and see us unless we want them, can they?"

"And we don't want them, do we? The doctors say that mosquito-bites and flies walking around on one bring all the malaria and fever to folks out in the woods like this. Besides, if you should want to sleep on a rainy day, the flies can't bother you."

Bunty undressed and said his prayers. Then he studied his cot doubtfully. "Daddy," he said finally, "how am I going to keep the blankets from slipping off onto the floor? This bed is pretty narrow."

"You are going to roll up in your blankets like

a soldier," explained his father. "Which side do you sleep on?"

"I snuggle down on my left side, but I turn over just before I forget."

"Well, that's what I thought. These blankets are folded together lengthwise. You creep in so you are lying with half of them under, and the other half over you. When you lie on your left side, the opening will be at your back. But when you turn over, the opening will be in front. So you needn't get cold, for you can draw the edges in about you."

Bunty crept in as his father had suggested, and Mr. Prescott gave a few touches to the bed and dropped the mosquito netting before retiring to his own cot. They talked for a few minutes, but Mr. Prescott smiled to himself when soon his words brought no reply. Bunty had drifted into a sound, dreamless sleep.

The sun was peering over the pines along the river when he awoke next morning. His father had brought a pail of water from the stream, and Bunty, after putting on his best clothes in honor of Sunday, washed with considerable splashing on the "back porch." Then they crossed the dew-wet fields to Pugh's and had a delicious breakfast.

They were sunning themselves in front of the tent an hour later when the bushes along the river

parted noiselessly and out stepped Redbird. Bunty would not have believed a person could move so softly, but he happened to be looking toward the spot where the Indian made his appearance. One moment, there was a leafy screen, quivering under a gentle breeze; the next, the branches spread as though the wind had become slightly stronger, and the red man appeared. It was so much like magic that Bunty almost felt tempted to rub his eyes.

Redbird advanced with a wide smile, his wet moccasins toeing in through the grass. "How!" he said cordially, shaking hands with father and son. He had observed the day by combing his long black hair until it shone in the sunlight. Also, he had stuck a feather in the band of his battered hat.

Refusing Mr. Prescott's offer of a stool, he squatted on his heels before them. "Young Chief better," he announced, after a critical glance at Bunty's face. "Eyes better, cheeks like strawberry. Un-nh-hh!"

"He's going fishing Monday," announced Mr. Prescott.

"Good. Big speckle jump"—Redbird clapped his hands to show the speed of the trout—"then he jerk. Pull Young Chief into water, mebbe?" He gave one of his silent laughs, in which Mr.

Prescott and even Buntty soon joined heartily.

“Well, that would be only fair if he did,” said Mr. Prescott. “Because Young Chief is going to try to pull him *out* of the water.”

“So,” agreed Redbird. “I think Young Chief get ‘um. Make big speckle mad. He tire all out bimeby. Then you haul ‘um in.”

“How is Mr. Fox’s barn coming, Redbird?” queried Mr. Prescott.

“Most done,” answered the Indian. “Log all cut. Fox comin’ over to-day. See!”

Mr. Fox had appeared at the opening of the bush which marked the entrance to Englishman’s Camp. He strode toward them, his keen woodsman’s eye taking in everything. “Old Black Fox,” said Redbird, with a grin.

The settler had advanced a dozen paces when another figure stepped out of the brush-hidden road. It was Fox’s eldest son, a tall, slender young man of nineteen. He carried a rifle over his left arm. “Red Fox,” announced Redbird, much as a showman would introduce his actors. The name seemed to fit, for the youth had a shock of flaming red hair. A dozen paces behind him was a boy of seventeen, sturdily built and with a swarthy face. His black eyebrows met over his nose. He looked much like his father, and again Redbird’s smiling, “Young Black Fox,” was pat.



The Fox family visits Englishman's Camp.

Behind him was a blond youngster of about twelve years, whose fair skin was in strange contrast to the other's dark complexion. "Silver Fox," said Redbird, with a wave of his hand. Bringing up the rear was a boy about Bunty's own age—a round-faced youngster, plump as a partridge. His short legs twinkled as he vainly tried to imitate the long, easy stride of the others and still keep up with them. "Little Round Fox," said Redbird. "That's all."

Mr. Fox stopped before them with affected surprise. "I thought I told you to work on that barn, Injun," he said, after he had greeted Mr. Prescott and Bunty.

Redbird shrugged his shoulders. "No work Sunday," he replied.

"No pay, then," said the settler.

"Put 'um barn on back, carry 'um Grayling," grunted Redbird, who was enjoying the banter fully, and they all laughed.

As their elders talked together, the boys surrounded Bunty. "Hello, Young Chief," said the blond boy.

"Hello, Silver Fox," returned Bunty, quickly, and the older boys laughed.

"I can throw you," declared Little Round Fox, advancing a pudgy leg.

"But he can run faster than you," said Red

Fox, who did not think his brother's remark very polite.

"Did you ever see a league baseball game?" asked Young Black Fox.

"Why, of course," returned Bunty, in surprise. "I've seen Detroit play ever so many times!"

"Tell us about it!" they cried in chorus, dropping down in the grass in front of him. He was soon deep in a description of the game as it is played in the big cities. They hung open-mouthed on his words. Though they lived in the wilderness, they sometimes saw Detroit papers, and knew the names of the league stars. They played themselves, with a homemade yarn ball among the stumps at their home clearing. But a real game, with the players in uniform, using a "dollar-and-a-half" ball, and "wagon-tongue" bats, was quite beyond them.

Bunty was quite a wonderful person to them, because of what he had seen. It did not occur to them that they were quite as wonderful to him, for they could hunt and fish as skillfully as Redbird. Even Little Round Fox was a good rifle shot and a finished woodsman, who knew all the signs of the wilderness. He could go anywhere without a compass and not get lost.

Dinnertime came all too soon, and Redbird, Mr. Fox and the boys plunged into the bush and were

soon lost to view. But they were back in a couple of hours. It never occurred to them to eat the meal at Englishman's Camp (though invited to do so), when only two miles from home.

On their return Buntz made the boys talk of their life. Now it was his turn to listen breathlessly to stories of bird and deer and bear hunting, of trout fishing on the Au Sable, of swimming in Lost Lake, which is in the wilderness across the stream, and of huckleberry picking in the marshes bordering the Grayling trail. When the sun had dropped behind the trees which formed the western boundary of their little park, and their visitors had gone, Buntz felt he had never known a shorter day.

Again he sat with his father by the glowing camp fire and talked. But not for long. Neither could suppress his yawns; and it was still early when they had crawled beneath the mosquito nettings and rolled up in their blankets.

The next morning Mr. Prescott began a work which kept him busy forenoons for several weeks: cutting timber for the addition to the cabin and for the winter's wood. Carrying the bright, new axe, and with Buntz following closely, he went into the scrub and cut down jack pine, cedar and tamarack. All sizes and lengths fell under the blows of the shining blade. Buntz amused him-

self by watching the flying chips, sniffing the fragrant woods odors, and hunting for ripe huckleberries. Occasionally he saw a squirrel or a chipmunk. Once they flushed a partridge, which arose with a noisy whir of wings and flew swiftly away before their startled eyes.

At noon they returned to camp with famous appetites. Mrs. Pugh seemed more than pleased at the way her warm biscuits and fried chicken disappeared. Mr. Pugh came in from one of his long trips up the river. He favored Mr. Prescott with a nod, and Bunty with a pat on the head.

After an hour's rest they returned to camp, and as Mr. Prescott said, "prepared to go to house-keeping in earnest." First he secured a spade from the cabin and dug a trench about the tents. From this trench two or three drains led to lower ground. Thus, in case of much rain, the tents would not be flooded, but the water would be carried away as fast as it fell.

The rug in the sleeping tent was taken out and swept; the floors were carefully swept; and the bedding, which had been spread on the guy ropes to air, was taken in. When the beds had been made and the tents tidied up, the canvas home had taken on an air of snug cheerfulness that was wholly delightful.

CHAPTER XII

BUNTY'S FIRST TROUT

By this time it was four o'clock, and the sky had become overcast. The breeze had died down, and there was a faint, low rumble of thunder from the south. "Looks like rain, old man," said Mr. Prescott, "but we'll leave the tents rolled up for a while longer. If the wind doesn't blow, they may stay up all night as usual.

"It can't hurt you any," he continued, in answer to Bunty's look of surprise. "I know that a good many people are afraid of 'the night air.' Well, night air is just the same as day air. We can't get too much of either. And now let's get on our hip boots; I believe the trout will bite until dark."

The boy joyfully set about getting ready for his first fishing trip. As they fitted the rods together, slipped the reels into place and strung the slender line through the little metal loops on each rod, Mr. Prescott asked Bunty to repeat his instructions. This he did readily.

As they were starting out, Mr. Prescott said,

with a sly twinkle in his eye: "Supposing we feared wind and rain would come while we were gone; how would you suggest preparing for it?"

"Why, I'd roll down the tent and fasten it, daddy," replied Bunty; "and then I'd tighten all the ropes good and tight."

"You'd bring our happy little home down about our ears, son," smiled his father.

"Why?" cried the boy in surprise.

"Because canvas and rope contract when they are wet," replied Mr. Prescott. "Each fibre curls up so tightly that something has to give. Usually some of the stakes are pulled out of the ground, and a good puff of wind lays your tent flat. If the stakes hold, the tent may rip like an old drumhead. I have seen a tent slit from top to bottom by a shower. So in case it rains, loosen your ropes, don't tighten them."

When they reached the river, Mr. Prescott drew forth his fly book and made careful selection. "They are fond of light-colored insects on a dark day," he explained, "so we'll give them what they like. Here is a 'coachman' and his brother. Let's try them." He took two of the lifelike, cunningly planned flies from the book, and attached one to Bunty's line and one to his own. The sharp barb of the hook was hidden in the feathery white body of the "coachman."

They were near the cabin. Mr. Prescott looked thoughtfully over the broad, rippling expanse of the ford, and then said: "We will wade upstream, old man. You keep within a rod of the shore. I will go farther in. Just whip the stream. The fish will take the fly by the time it reaches the water, or before, if he is going to take it at all. A dozen casts or so should prove whether the 'coachman' is any good in this light."

"But, daddy," said Bunty, "I don't see how we can catch any fish here! See how shallow it is; why, it wouldn't hide a minnow."

His father smiled. "Don't you worry, old man," he replied. "The big fellows like this shallow water. And sometimes they lie in pockets where you'd think there wasn't a spoonful. Now, in we go."

Though it was not deep, the water ran swift and strong. It tugged at their boots, and made each step hard to take. Bunty's heart beat with excitement as he made his first cast, even though he felt sure there were no fish about.

The line settled lightly on the water and the "coachman" sank out of sight. The fly was not attacked, and he drew it forth again. Once more the line and fly were thrown gently forward among the flecks of hurrying foam. But there was no "strike."

They advanced about fifty yards, without result. Bunty thought at times there were tiny ripples ahead not caused by stones in the river bed, but he could not be sure. For a time it seemed they were the only living things in the river. Then a half-grown trout darted past him with the speed of light. That encouraged him. There *were* fish in that river, and he was going to have one!

Presently his father beckoned him to stop. Wading over, he replaced the lure on their lines with "white millers." Then they resumed their journey upstream. As the fly rose and fell without result Bunty decided the sport was getting tame. His legs ached from the buffeting of the current, and the coldness of the water was changing his feet to lumps of ice.

Just ahead the stream became slightly deeper. The eddies had carried away the sand from about a big stump. The hurrying water showed a deeper brown than where it ran over the shingle. One who had long fished for trout would have known that the stump was a good lurking-place for trout and would have come up carefully. But Bunty, who was beginning to wish himself on the bank, splashed along noisily. He made a poor cast while glancing over to see what his father was doing.

The next moment he forgot that his feet were cold and that his arms ached. As his fly struck

the water, there was a splash, as if some one had tossed in a stone. There was a tremendous tug; Bunty was caught off his balance, and the next instant he was floundering in the cold water. So unexpected and strong was the tug that even his face was under water for a moment.

As the boy struggled, dripping and puffing, to get back to his feet again, jerk after jerk caused the rod to slap the stream with loud smacks. It was all he could do to keep it from being torn from his grasp. The trout dashed hither and yon, madly seeking escape. The reel zipped as the line ran out. Fortunately the fish did not rush back toward him, but worked to reach the partially sunken stump.

Clinging desperately to the rod, the boy managed to scramble to his knees and then to his feet as his father came splashing hurriedly to him. "Want some help, old man?" queried Mr. Prescott. Bunty shook his head. Breath was too precious to use for talking—but *he* was going to land that fish!

The battle began in earnest. The boy stood, leaning to the current a little, with feet planted wide apart. He tried to guess which way the monster would dart next. He caught no glimpse of the fish; but he felt, from the way it jerked, that it must be as large as himself. Remembering

his father's caution, he kept the tip of the rod up. Every time the trout slacked, he reeled in.

Would it never tire? Back and forth, back and forth the captive zigzagged, minute after minute. The dashes were as vigorous as ever. Bunty tried to check and weary him by putting a "drag" on the outgoing line with his thumb. He was aware, dimly, that the thumb hurt after awhile. The trout continued to steal a little more line with each rush. At last it gained the goal for which it had been striving—the big stump—and dived into the black hole beneath it.

There the prisoner sulked. Cunningly he had caused the line to fall over a root, easing Bunty's pull. The boy reeled in until a dangerous strain was placed upon the line. The fish did not budge.

There was a minute's lull while they rested, Bunty breathing heavily. Mr. Prescott stood well back in the stream. He understood that his son wanted to conquer the trout alone, and offered no advice. The trout stayed sullenly beneath the stump. Bunty, keeping the line taut, wondered what to do next.

Presently an idea came to him. Two or three sharp jerks brought no stir from the fish. It was as though the hook was fast in the stump. So he swung out to the east, toward the center of the stream, and increased the strain on the line. The

line slipped off the detaining root, and the fish, taken at a new angle, was forced to action. Out he came into open water.

His past efforts to escape seemed weak compared with the speed and strength now displayed. Repeatedly he rushed away until every foot of the long line was out. Then he would come back like a bullet while Bunty reeled in frantically. Twice when brought up short he leaped into the air, darting away at an angle as he splashed into the water again. He tried to tangle or foul the line. But Bunty managed to keep him from doing so.

The boy was tiring fast. His feet ached from the cold water, and his legs seemed ready to double under him. His arms, from the constant jerking, seemed half pulled from the sockets. He wanted to drop the rod, wade ashore, and throw himself, sobbing, into the long grass. But something kept him from doing so. His father gave him an occasional word of cheer and encouragement, to which he responded with a weak smile.

At last, in his mad efforts to be free, the trout made a fatal mistake. He flashed through the water in a wide half-circle, until he was downstream from his captor. At once his efforts seemed to lose their power. The battering of the swift current and Bunty's reeling in on the line were too much for him. His struggles grew fainter

and fainter as the choppy waves struck him, taking away his strength.

The discovery that he was winning put new life into Bunty. He drew in on the line until the trout was scarcely six feet from the end of his pole. Mr. Prescott noted the surrender, too, and hurried over. When he was directly downstream from his son, he sang out: "Let go your reel, Bunty!"

The swift current carried the fish downstream as the line paid out. Too late the captive saw his danger. With a last protesting flop, he was scooped up in the wide-mouthed net! Bunty had fought his first trout, and won.

CHAPTER XIII

MR. PRESCOTT BECOMES A CARPENTER

Bunty did not have time to wonder how he would get ashore. Mr. Prescott, after slipping the trout into his creel, which hung from his shoulder, took his son's rod. Then Mr. Pugh, who had waded in unseen by Bunty, swung the boy easily to his shoulder. "Good man," said the quiet Englishman, and Bunty glowed with pride at the two words. Coming from Mr. Pugh they meant much.

Mr. Prescott hurried to the tent and got dry clothing ready. Then, undressing the boy, he rubbed him down with a coarse towel until Bunty was in a delightful glow. By the time the fresh clothes had been donned, Mr. Pugh was back from his house with a pair of scales and a tape measure. The trout, a beautiful slaty-brown fellow with green speckles on his smooth back and sides, was lifted out of the basket to be weighed and measured. Bunty felt a pang of pity when he saw that the jaws of his gallant foe were still moving feebly. He felt that pang many times afterwards, and it served to keep him from being cruel and

wasteful. It was fun to hunt and fish—but it was too bad to take the lives of the pretty, wild things of the woods and streams!

“Well, old man,” smiled Mr. Prescott, “you’re a real fisherman. “He’s fourteen inches long, and weighs a pound and a quarter. Anyone would be proud of him. It took you twelve minutes to land him, but you played him like a veteran. I don’t believe Mr. Pugh, here, could have done it better.”

“That’s right,” agreed the fisherman heartily. “Would you like to have him for supper?”

Bunty clapped his hands, pity forgotten in the discovery that he was very hungry. “Oh, may I?” he questioned eagerly.

Mr. Pugh nodded.

“You’ve worked enough for to-day,” said Mr. Prescott. “Suppose you sit on the bank and watch me? I’m going to try to catch enough for all of us.”

Bunty readily agreed. He felt more like sitting still than wading in the cold stream just then. Besides, the whizzing line, when the fish was first hooked, had worn a groove in his thumb in which the blood showed red. So, with Mr. Pugh for a companion, he took his place on the yielding turf, and watched with keen interest while his father caught four more speckled beauties in half an hour. Then he helped dress the fish.

Mrs. Pugh rolled them in flour and fried them deliciously. It was a proud moment when she set the boy's plate before him and said, "There's *your* trout, Bunty! Now eat him all up." It is needless to say he tried his best to obey the command.

Soon after supper a drizzling rain began to fall. There was no wind with it, so the tents were left rolled up. They retired early, after loosening the guy ropes and making sure that the trench about the tents was open.

The gentle patter of the rain woke them next morning, and it continued almost without pause for three days. Work in the woods would be very uncomfortable, so Mr. Prescott took Mr. Pugh's horse and wagon and brought to camp a load of trees he had cut down. They ranged in thickness from four to twelve inches, and some were twenty feet long.

"Now, old man," he announced, "we are going to do some carpenter work. We need quite a bit of furniture. Do you suppose you and I can build it?"

"Well, daddy, we can try," answered the boy, cheerfully.

Mr. Prescott brought out his saw, hammer, auger and some nails. Then he carried one of the poles under the fly and fell to work. "First we

need a couple of easy chairs," he explained. "A camp stool is all right, but a chap can't lean back and take comfort in it."

He sawed two four-foot lengths from the pole. On the inside of each were bored three holes two inches deep—one near the top, one three inches below the middle and one five inches from the bottom. Then three stout, straight maple limbs were secured and from them pieces about two inches in diameter and twenty-two inches in length were cut. The ends of these three pieces were shaved down so that they could be driven into the auger-holes, though fitting very tightly. When they were in place, Mr. Prescott had a ladder with sides four inches through, and three stout rungs in it.

Next he sawed off the bottom of the sides so that the ladder would not stand upright, but leaned back almost halfway between the perpendicular and the horizontal—at an angle of 125 degrees. To hold it in that position, two supports about three inches thick were cut and nailed into notches just above the center of the uprights, at the back. These supports were about twenty-eight inches long, and there was a similar distance between their lower ends and the lower ends of the uprights.

The frame of the chair now resembled two copies of the letter "Y" turned upside down and

standing side by side with three rungs between them, the "Ys" being eighteen inches apart. Once more the auger was brought into play and a hole was bored in the front, below the center of each upright. Into each hole a piece of sapling eighteen inches long and carefully smoothed was driven for an arm rest. These arm rests were each braced by a bit of wood extending down from the end to the slanting main timber—thus completing a triangle.

The framework was now practically complete, but to make the chair stronger, pieces of board were nailed from the bottom of each upright to the bottom of its support on the outside. Mr. Prescott next produced a roll of heavy canvas and cut from it a strip six feet long and eighteen inches wide. Mrs. Pugh hemmed the raw edge on her sewing machine, so there was not a loose thread anywhere.

The upper and lower ends of the canvas were now securely fastened with long, heavy tacks to strips of board each twenty-four inches long. One of these boards was nailed across the top of the two uprights, at the back. The canvas was dropped down over the top two rungs, but under the bottom one, and the other strip was nailed to the uprights at the bottom. The chair was complete.

“Try it, old man,” invited Mr. Prescott, and Bunty sat down in it. He found that the canvas made a soft but firm support for his back, and that the middle rung held his knees comfortably. Because of the slant of the uprights it was almost a reclining chair.

“Why, daddy,” said Bunty delighted, “it’s almost as good as your Morris chair at home.”

“It’s a trifle big for you, though,” replied Mr. Prescott. “I built it for myself. Yours will be smaller, so you can reach the lower rung with your heels. The canvas goes under that rung, instead of over it, so as to give a chap a foot rest.”

CHAPTER XIV

REDBIRD DECIDES TO MOVE

Bunty's chair was next built, and it fitted him exactly. Then Mr. Prescott added a table to their supply of furniture. It was simple in construction but strong and durable. The legs were thick pieces of pine, twenty-eight inches long. They were ranged upright in rectangular form, and nailed in position by pieces of board flush with the top. Across this framework other boards, cut in equal lengths, were nailed. Thus was formed a table with smooth, even surface, thirty by forty-two inches. It was strengthened by pieces of board joining the legs near the bottom.

Though their cots were quite comfortable, Mr. Prescott decided that something more nearly approaching a bed would be better for long use. So next he built a bunk for each of them.

These bunks were started much as the table had been, but the legs were only eighteen inches high. The tops were enclosed by boards about the edges, so that each became a shallow box nine inches deep. The bunks were thirty inches wide,

and Mr. Prescott's was seven feet long, while Bunty's was five and a half feet long.

The bunks were left out under the fly until the rainy days had passed. Then, after they had been thoroughly dried in the sun, the boxlike tops were filled with branches of the pungent balsam fir and with long, fragrant grasses until each was heaping full. Blankets were then spread over the soft masses and tucked in well at the sides. The result was beds "fit for a king," Mr. Prescott declared.

"A good many people," he told Bunty, "think they must be uncomfortable when they camp out, or they will be missing some benefit. But I believe in being just as cosy as though we were at home. To be strong, we have to eat and sleep well. I'm doing both. How about you, old man?"

"Oh, daddy, you know I am!" returned Bunty with a long-drawn sigh of contentment.

"How!"

Father and son turned with a start at the word. There, under the fly and outlined against the brilliant sunshine which had followed seventy hours of rain, stood Redbird, smiling at them. He had come over from Fox's, in his usual noiseless fashion, to visit them.

Mr. Prescott was about to nail the bits of board upright at the corners of their beds for the sup-

port of the mosquito netting when Redbird appeared. The Indian noted it, and without waiting for a reply to his greeting, he raised his hand and said, "No; wait." Then he turned and strode away to the fringe of trees along the river bank.

He was back presently with four long willow withes. Taking some bits of buckskin from his pocket, he lashed two of these withes to each bed, one across the head, and the other just above the middle. Over them he draped the nettings, which gave the beds the appearance of prairie schooners. Then he stood back to admire his work.

"That's a better way than mine, Redbird," said Mr. Prescott, pleased. "Where did you learn it and what do you call it?"

"Him travoy," returned Redbird, tersely; "Injun way." He squatted on his heels under the fly.

"How's the barn, Redbird?" inquired Bunty.

"Barn, he done," was the reply. "Old Black Fox gimme heap money. Redbird no work now, two—three moons. Hunt—fish. Show Little White Chief ketchum heap trout, chase deer. Un-nh-hh?"

He looked from father to son as he spoke, and his grunt was plainly a question. Bunty was the first to catch his meaning, and clapped his hands

delightedly. "Oh, daddy," he cried; "he wants to stay at the camp here with us! Wouldn't that be just fine? Tell him he can—please, daddy!"

"You want to stay with us?" asked Mr. Prescott.

Redbird nodded vigorously, meanwhile grunting affirmatively.

"But where would you sleep?"

The Indian swept his right arm in a careless circle. "Anywhere, when she no storm; rain, in Englishman's barn."

Pugh, on being consulted by Mr. Prescott, expressed himself as being in favor of the plan. Redbird was a good, trustworthy fellow, he said, who would watch over Buntty and teach him woodcraft. The Indian had often slept in his barn before, and had never stolen anything.

So Redbird was invited to come. He went to Grayling next day and secured his scanty belongings. Then he cleared himself a comfortable space in the barn. Mr. Prescott gave him one of the cots, of which he seemed very proud. It was not for several weeks, however, that they discovered that he did not sleep on the cot. To him it was a choice ornament, not a thing for use, and he spent his nights rolled up in a blanket beside it.

The Indian built him a kitchen of poles and

bark on the edge of the clearing and there cooked his own meals. Most of his food he shot or snared or caught. He utterly refused to take money from Mr. Prescott, but Bunty could persuade him to accept a small sum weekly.

In a few days he had made himself a place in their lives, and father and son grew to depend upon him and to trust him wholly. During the months of their stay in the north country he was never separated from Bunty for more than a few hours at a time.

CHAPTER XV

GETTING THE SOUVENIRS

It was on the Saturday after Redbird's coming that Hugo bethought himself of the list which Billy Anderson had given him before leaving Detroit. It contained the things, he knew, which his boy and girl friends wanted as souvenirs of the north country. So, settling himself comfortably in his easy-chair under the fly, he unfolded the soiled sheet of paper.

Billy's strong point had never been spelling, and for that and other reasons the list is worth copying just as he wrote it:

Deer Hugo:—

Here are the soovenears witch we want you to get up north if you can. Don't be to partikler about the girls, they don't no wat they want, ennyway. But ennything marked s thats for shure, get them because theare for some of the fellers.

A bo narrer (s) it's for me. Be sure to get it.

A neegal's fether to ware wen we play Injun and cowboy. (s) For Bobby Smith.

Bukskin tongs with witch to tie the captiv to the staik. (s) For Joe Lemon.

Awtum leves red and yellow. For Ethel

A pare of mogasuns for Susie Brown. (s) I walked home with her last nite.

A tomyhawk (s) for Harold Munson.

War paints for all of uss. (sss)

Some Injun scalps to hang at our belts (s)

A fur kap for Nellie Bright.

Some burchbark ritinpaper. For Maude Preston.

That's all.

Send them to me, expres, and I will give them out.

Yours truely,

William Brooks Anderson.

So puzzling was Billy's spelling that Mr. Prescott had to be called in to assist in translating. Redbird happened along and squatted on his heels to listen while the corrected list was read off: "A bow and arrow; an eagle's feather to wear when we play Indian and cowboy; buckskin thongs with which to tie the captive to the stake; autumn leaves, red and yellow; a pair of moccasins for Susie Brown; a tomahawk; war paints; Indian scalps; a fur cap; and birch bark for writing paper."

This assortment of articles seemed to please

Redbird immensely. He chuckled at the various items, and when Mr. Prescott read about the scalps, he laughed outright. "Little White Chief's friend heap funny," he said. "Like to see um. Redbird help git um presents?"

"I wish you would, Redbird," said Mr. Prescott. "Of course I am willing to pay for any of them——"

Redbird shook his head. "No pay," he interrupted. "Just one can't git, though."

"What's that?"

"Scalps; Injun no stand still!" and he chuckled again.

With Bunty, much interested, attending him, Redbird at once set out to get the souvenirs. He started at the top of the list. From his quarters in the barn he secured two strips of hickory, each about a yard long. They were straight, free from knots, and evidently intended for the purpose to which they were put. With a few strokes of his stout hunting knife, Redbird made a notch at each side of the ends of the bows, for that is what they were to be.

He measured off two lengths of stout fishline, cut them, put a loop in each end, and fitted them to the bent strips of hickory. The bows were now complete. Then he rapidly whittled out a dozen pine arrows about two feet long. The heads were

thick and blunt, and would carry the arrows true on their course for several yards.

“What did you make two bows for?” queried Bunty. “Billy Anderson only asked for one.”

“Don’t Little White Chief want his?” queried Redbird, in turn, apparently very much surprised.

“Why, Redbird!” cried the boy, delighted. “Is one really and truly for me? Thank you so much.” The copper-colored man showed his pleasure at Bunty’s thanks by prodding his little friend with his thumb as he had the day of their first meeting at Grayling.

“What next?” he asked.

“A neeg—I mean an eagle’s feather,” announced Bunty, from the list.

Redbird shook his head. “Dunno,” he said. “Eagle round here many moons ago. No see him for two snows now. Big bald feller. He live on Sable Knob——” pointing to a hill which reared its blue head far to the north——“but mebbe dead now. Mebbe my people have feather. I see. What next?”

“Buckskin thongs.”

“Good.” Redbird fumbled in his pockets and brought out four lengths of twisted buckskin which he handed to Bunty. They were just the thing for tying the captive, as Hugo realized. Before, they had always used clothesline when

about to burn a prisoner at the stake, and that did not seem real at all. The "stake" was a tree in the Prescott back yard. The place of the prisoner would be a proud one now. To be tied with real buckskin!

"Autumn leaves, red and yellow," said Bunty, as he laid the thongs beside the bow and arrow.

The Indian shook his head again. "No can get," he announced. "No frost for three moons. Get something else, mebbe. Come."

He plunged into the jack pines, walking at random, it seemed, for about a hundred yards. Then he dropped to his hands and knees and in a few minutes had picked a great bunch of tiny shrubs. Among the bright green leaves of the plant nestled crimson berries that gave off a pleasant odor. They were wintergreen berries, though Bunty did not know it.

Rising, the Indian went a little farther, to add pretty sweet ferns to his bouquet. Next, as surely as though he carried a map of the whole vast wilderness in his mind, he struck off again. In five minutes he had reached some bushes whose broad green leaves were curiously mottled with round patches of yellow. Then they went back to camp.

"Now what?" demanded Redbird, when Hugo had expressed his admiration for the bouquet.

"Moccasins for Susie Brown."

The Indian nodded. "Um. How beeg?"

"'Most as tall as I am," returned Hugo.

The Indian grinned. "I mean how beeg feet?"

"About so long," announced Hugo, measuring off a small space, after a careful study of his own shoes.

"Good. Get um my people. What next?"

"A tomahawk."

The hunting knife was brought forth again. Redbird seized a length of pine board, and soon had whittled out a very businesslike tomahawk. Mr. Pugh had some paint in the barn, and with this the Indian decorated it. Afterwards, the weapon, splendid in stripes of green and white, was hung up to dry. "Not real, but mebbe boy like um because Injun made um," he said shrewdly to Bunty, and to this Little White Chief readily agreed.

"Now?"

"War paints," said Bunty.

"Get um on Sable," again pointing to the northern hill. "Now?"

"Why—why," he stammered, embarrassed, "you see, Billy asked for those Indian scalps."

"No can get," returned Redbird, with a sly smile. "Scalp keep Injun's head warm in beeg snow. No give um up. Shall I ketch um asleep—cut scalp off?"

"No, no!" cried Bunty, with such lively horror that Redbird laughed outright and explained that he was only joking.

The Indian thought a moment and then his eyes brightened. "I know," he declared; "find something on Sable. Now what?"

"A fur cap for Nellie Bright."

This, to Bunty, seemed almost as difficult to get as the scalps. But it did not bother Redbird. From his store in the barn he produced a glossy otterskin. "Mees Inglesman," he said, and went to the Pugh home, the skin in his hand. Joint explanations from Hugo and the Indian enlisted her aid. Soon her nimble fingers had fashioned a cunning little cap. It was from Mrs. Pugh, too, that a great roll of birch bark "writing paper" was secured.

CHAPTER XVI

A VISIT TO SABLE KNOB

Mr. Prescott and the silent Englishman listened with amusement at dinner to Bunty's descriptions of the souvenir hunting. They were interested, too, and praised Redbird's efforts.

Pugh offered the loan of his horse and buckboard for a trip to Sable Knob, where Redbird could search for the eagle feather, the paints, and the other present which was to take the place of the scalps.

Bunty was delighted at the prospect of a journey to the stately hill. He seemed amply strong for such a trip, so Mr. Prescott decided to make it. When they told Redbird, he seemed glad that they were going with him. So, after spending a quiet Sunday at home, they started bright and early Monday morning.

The air was crisp and cool, and Bunty's Mackinaw did not seem a bit too heavy as they clambered into the buckboard. The stout, patient horse struck into a slow trot as he left the clearing and turned into a track which led through the

fragrant scrub. To the east, the sun peered cheerily at them over the ridge of hills.

Redbird rode for about half a mile. Then, with a grunt of apology, he vaulted over the wheel. Pointing straight ahead as their course, he went into the scrub. During the journey, which lasted until noon, he was constantly ranging back and forth through the wilderness. The road was deserted, and they saw no houses, though once a curl of smoke far to the west indicated a settler's cabin.

Mrs. Pugh had put up a bountiful lunch, and they stopped when the sun was highest to eat it. Redbird had led the way to a little spring, cold, and clear as crystal, which bubbled out of the ground at the foot of Sable Knob. They took refreshing draughts of the water as did Pierre, the horse, who was tethered near with his bundle of hay.

Buntty was impatient to continue their quest and so, after half an hour's rest, they began climbing the hill. The Indian directed their steps toward a ridge of bare sand which shone yellow through the underbrush.

The surface of the ridge was covered with loose stones, large and small and of various colors. Redbird began selecting thin, flat ones, somewhat the size and shape of a lady's watch, until he had

a dozen of them—red, brown, blue, yellow and white. The pebbles were smooth to the touch, and had none of the flinty hardness of field stones. In fact, they could be broken between the fingers.

“War paint,” said the Indian. He touched one of the blue stones to his tongue, and drew the moistened spot across the back of his hand. A thick, blue mark was the result. He tested each of the stones in this manner, tossing away one which was too hard to leave a trace. The balance, however, proved to be natural crayons. So another souvenir was supplied.

“Eagle’s nest, now,” announced their guide, and they set off for the summit.

It was a long, hard climb of several minutes, and though they stopped frequently to rest, both Buntz and his father were glad to throw themselves down on the yielding turf when the goal was reached.

About them spread a scene of lonesome beauty. There seemed to be no level land anywhere, the earth being thrown up as far as the eye could see, like the frozen waves of a vast blue ocean. Jack pine hills met the horizon on every side. To the eastward a crooked belt of heavy timber marked the course of the Au Sable.

The Indian was not in the least distressed by the ascent. He breathed no more rapidly than if he

had been walking on level ground. Without delay he made preparations to climb to the eagle's aerie.

The nest had been located in the top of a huge dead pine which crowned the summit of the hill. This stub was fully seventy feet in height. It had been splintered by lightning, and a mass of thick, weather-beaten sticks, protruding in every direction from the top, added to its wild appearance.

Redbird measured the smooth, dead trunk a moment with his eyes. Then he gave his trousers a hitch, encircled the tree—or as much of it as he could—with his arms, and began to climb. He used arms, legs, hands and moccasined feet in the task and made rapid progress.

Though soon within reaching distance of the nest, he did not stop to explore it. With one vigorous thrust of his hand he overturned the mass of sticks, sending it clattering to the ground. Then he rapidly descended by sliding down the trunk.

Bunty's eager search of the remains of the nest yielded only disappointment. The eagles either had left their haunts two years before, as Redbird declared, or had been killed and their bodies carried off by hunters. Only a few short, bedraggled bits of feathers had remained in the nest. Wind and rain had destroyed all long ones.

“Never mind,” said Redbird, consolingly. “Get um some other place. Come.”

They had climbed the hill from the south side, but now he turned at right angles to their course, going down the eastern slope. Following close at his heels, father and son came presently to a strange sight.

Some distance down from the summit, they worked through a thick fringe of underbrush into an amphitheater possibly one hundred yards across. The tiny bowl was shut in on every side by higher ground. No trees grew on the level, springy turf, and the heavy border of vegetation gave the place an air of seclusion and mystery. It seemed to prepare one for the unusual.

And the scene which it presented was unusual. The grass was everywhere dotted with the bleaching bones of animals. Skeletons of raccoons, foxes, deer and even bears, each on its own bit of sward, greeted the eye. They seemed to be arranged in some sort of order, for in one part there were several sets of deer horns quite close together. Likewise the bears had a corner to themselves.

“Come here to die,” said Redbird, with a sweeping gesture of his arm about the enclosure. “When um shot, or sick, or too old, head for Sable and lie down. No leave again; always die here.”

"I have read of such things," said Mr. Prescott, "but I never saw an animal burying-ground before. To tell the truth, I hardly believed dumb beasts had so wonderful an instinct."

"I often thought of what became of the old bears and deer, daddy," said Hugo. "In the cold winter, when there isn't much to eat, their children can't take care of them very well. The poor things!"

Meanwhile the Indian, who was evidently familiar with the place, was moving among the heaps of white bones, picking up something here and there. Presently he signaled that he was ready to go by pointing silently down the hill.

Old Pierre was found nodding comfortably on his tether. He was hitched to the buckboard and the return journey was begun.

As before, they saw no person. Once or twice, as evening came on, there was a crashing in the bushes as they passed, probably caused by some frightened large animal. Again, they caught a glimpse of an unwieldy shape crossing the narrow road ahead. It was the merest fleeting blur, but Pierre stopped and snorted uneasily. "Bear," said the Indian. Sure enough, when they had reached the spot, they found big tracks outlined in the sand, strangely like the footprint of a human being. They had no weapons with them, so Bruin

was permitted to go on his way unmolested. Doubtless he had learned of their nearness and he, too, thought it wise not to meddle, for there was neither sight nor sound of him.

The sun had gone down and the first pale stars were coming shyly into the heavens when Redbird vaulted out of the buckboard. "Go straight," he said, pointing to the south. "Don't turn off. Can't miss um camp."

"Why, where are you going, Redbird?" queried Bunty in surprise.

"Git um moccasins," said the brown man and was gone.

They reached home safely, to find that Mrs. Pugh had kept a warm supper for them. The next morning, when Hugo came out of the tent, he uttered a little cry of pleased surprise. On one of the stools under the fly were the "war paints," a pair of beautifully beaded little moccasins, and a necklace of bear's teeth. This latter ornament had been made during the night by Redbird from teeth which he had picked up at the animals' burying ground.

CHAPTER XVII

BUNTY'S SECOND INDIAN

Mr. Prescott had resumed the work of cutting and drawing timber for the addition to the cabin and also for the winter wood supply. Redbird had not reappeared since the previous night, though, because of the souvenirs which he had brought, Bunty knew that he was not far off.

The boy himself was curled up in his easy-chair in front of the tent, reading one of the books brought from home, when a shadow fell across the page. He looked up to encounter the steadfast gaze of a strange Indian.

The man was much older than Redbird, and had not the clear, straightforward look of the latter. In fact, there was something so forbidding about his appearance that Bunty glanced toward the Englishman's in the hope that he would see either Mr. Pugh, his wife or Redbird. But no one was in sight.

The Indian was strangely attired. He wore a fashionably cut shirt with a stiff bosom. It had once been white, but was so no longer. It was

tucked into a pair of buckskin breeches, heavily fringed along the outer seams. Around his waist was strapped a cartridge belt, over a frock coat which fell below his knees. He wore broken patent leather shoes. On his tangled black hair was perched a battered silk hat. In one hand he carried a shotgun, in the other a long wicked-looking knife.

Bunty was much frightened by the man's appearance and manner. But he forgot the fear for a moment when he noticed the ornaments thrust into the top of the silk hat. They were two long, glossy feathers, standing proudly erect. The feathers were brownish in tinge, except for the tips, which were dyed a vivid red. "Eagle feathers," thought the boy; "wish I had them!"

But the man stood motionless, evidently waiting for him to speak, and he dismissed the thought of the feathers. Fear of the fellow returned, and Bunty asked rather tremblingly: "What do you want?"

"Money," was the prompt reply. "I am hungry; want something to eat." His tones were guttural, but he spoke English more plainly than Redbird.

"I—I haven't any money," returned Bunty.

"You have a watch," retorted the Indian, point-

ing to the leather guard on the boy's shirt. "That will do. I can sell it."

"Please wait until my father comes home," urged Bunty, clasping his hand tightly over the pocket that held the watch. Again he looked about eagerly for some one who would come to his assistance, but the clearing lay discouragingly empty.

"No," said the man, gruffly. "Your father is too far away. I cannot wait. Don't stir!" he warned, as Bunty made a motion to rise. "I pay for your watch; I sing to you!"

This satisfied Bunty that the man had been drinking, and was all the more dangerous if crossed. So he sank back into his chair. Still, though his heart beat almost suffocatingly with fear, he was determined not to give up his handsome little watch without a struggle. His father or Mr. Pugh or Redbird must soon appear. If he kept cool, and did not attempt to give an alarm, the Indian might be induced to postpone the robbery until one of them came. So he said bravely, in a voice he tried hard to keep from breaking: "All right; sing to me, please."

The Indian nodded, grasped his shotgun near the middle, and raised his knife on high with the other hand. Then, bending his body almost double, he began to walk in a circle in front of

Bunty, lifting his knees very high, like a spirited horse, until they almost touched his chin with each step. And as he went through this barbarous dance, he chanted in a high voice:

“Behold, I am Joe Neebish,
Strong man of the Chippewas;
My name is Swift Water,
Because I am like the white rapids.
I kill the deer on the hillsides;
The bear I have struck down with my knife.
The fox is not more cunning nor tireless
Than Joe Neebish, the Swift Water.

“I am the son of a great chieftain;
Once my people were powerful,
But now they are scattered.
The frost kills the counselors:
They die of the coughing.
The white man steals the hunting,
He snares the swift trout in the streams.
Once we owned the whole northland;
Now he makes us his servants.

“Joe Neebish is hungry;
He has walked far through the heavy sands;
No one will give him food;
But he cannot starve like a dog.

The watch of the Little White Chief
And the guns and blankets will save Swift
Water.

The Big White Chief is gone,
And so is the Englishman——”

“Redbird here,” announced a calm voice, and the young Indian, noiseless as ever, stepped from behind the tent. Seeing Bunty’s joyful start, he laid his hand for a moment on the boy’s shoulder.

Neebish straightened up very suddenly at sight of his young tribesman. He stopped dancing, and a foolish look came into his face. “How, Redbird,” he said hurriedly. “I sang for the Little White Chief; he was lonely.”

“More lonely after you stole um watch, Neebish,” grunted Redbird. “Firewater put you in stone house with bars some day.”

“Neebish was joking,” returned the strange Indian, but the hangdog look on his face showed he did not expect them to believe his words.

“S’pose I tell sheriff you kill deer wrong moons. Joke?” queried Redbird, looking at him keenly.

Swift Water started at the words. “You won’t tell, Redbird? Neebish had to live, and the deer——”

“I tell um, you no stay away from here!”

“I stay away,” urged Neebish, eagerly, glad to

escape punishment on such terms. "I go down Higgins Lake; stay there with white man who wants guide."

Redbird made no move to detain him, and the older man, shouldering his gun and returning his knife to its sheath, faced toward the road.

Bunty had listened without a word to the dialogue between the two red men, but now he could be silent no longer. "Oh, Redbird," he cried "ask him where he got those eagle feathers in his hat!"

"Little White Chief can have them," said Swift Water, halting at once. He removed the hat, plucked forth the feathers, and handed them to the boy with a smile intended to be friendly. To Bunty's words of thanks and his promise of payment if the Indian would await his father's return he replied only with a shake of the head.

Hugo watched him until he had passed out of sight beyond the entrance of the clearing. Then he asked: "Was his father really a chief, Redbird?"

"Yes. His tribe roamed from Mackinaw to big bay south. Heap trout and deer. Plenty to eat in beeg snow. White man bring firewater. Injun drink; no good. Neebish drink; no can hunt. Bimeby he starve."

"Then," returned Bunty thoughtfully, "some of what he sang was true?"

Redbird nodded vigorously. "Heap true!"

Bunty caressed the glossy, red-tipped feathers which Neebish had given him. "Well," he said, taking a long breath, "I'm sorry for him, even if he did try to steal my watch! And I'm glad he came, because we have the eagle feathers now."

Redbird smiled. "No eagle feather," he replied. "They from wild turkey. But Little White Chief's friend like um just the same. Un-nh-hh?"

CHAPTER XVIII

LEARNING HOW TO SHOOT

The box of souvenirs was packed next day and sent to Detroit, Redbird taking it to the Grayling express office in the buckboard. In due time letters came from Billy Anderson and several of the others, telling of their delight at the presents. Billy later admitted that he had to stay after school twice on account of them. Once he had fastened his wrist to the desk with a thong, using a slipknot, and he could not free himself in time to go to class. More mortifying still, it was the teacher who unloosed the thong, making sarcastic remarks as she did so.

At recess another day early in September, he and Bobby Smith had streaked their faces with the war paint and marched boldly into the room. That day, after the others had gone home, they wrote "War paint" five hundred times each on the blackboard.

All this happened, of course, long after Banty had sent them the box. To get back to our story: Little White Chief was learning more about the northland, and learning to love it more every day.

Mr. Prescott had formed the habit of working in the scrub half of each day, and spending the other half in recreation with his son. Quite often they went fishing, and Hugo soon became an expert with the rod. He learned to study the sky and the water and to choose his fly accordingly. In time he could tempt the big trout to strike when his father, and even Mr. Pugh, could not.

They bathed in the shallows of the Au Sable when the water was warm enough, never going beyond Bunty's depth, for he had not yet learned to swim. There were so many things pressing that the swimming lesson was put off from day to day.

His strength came back steadily. His face began to grow round and plump, and the color returned to his cheeks. He slept soundly beneath the crisp, twinkling stars, which he watched each night from his bunk until his eyes closed, in spite of all that he could do to keep them open. And his appetite was such that Mrs. Pugh said, smiling: "Now you are beginning to eat like a real boy!" He still coughed, but the attacks did not leave him worn out and breathless, as formerly.

Mr. Prescott sent to Grayling for a light axe, and taught him to swing it so as to strike a clean, strong blow. Thereafter Hugo did his share in cutting the timber.

His father had become quite a skillful woodsman. He showed Bunty how, when a tree was tottering, a blow on one side or the other would drop it just where the chopper desired. This was a valuable bit of knowledge, and by it the trees were kept from striking into standing trees and lodging there.

The moment Bunty began to feel the least bit tired, his father insisted that he rest. So the chopping always remained a pleasure instead of becoming a task. The daily swinging of the axe squared his delicate shoulders and developed the muscles of his slender arms.

Mr. Prescott now began teaching Hugo the use of firearms. The first lesson was with a twenty-two caliber rifle. "We'll start with this, old man," he said; "because it is light and will not tire your arms to hold it. And there is no recoil from the discharge, and recoil is what makes one flinch."

"What do you mean by 'flinch,' daddy?" asked the boy.

"It's an involuntary attempt of your body—that is, of some of the muscles of the body—to avoid punishment. You see, when one fires a gun that has considerable recoil or 'kick' to it, the body begins to dread the repeated blows on the shoulder and the shock which affects the whole struc-

ture. The mind does not worry over this kick. The mind knows that it really hurts very little, if at all, so is not afraid.

“So the shooter as a whole, since he is controlled by his mind, never thinks of the kick; he is too busy trying to hold the gun steady and to aim well. But while he is striving for those things, the muscular system gets all tuned up, waiting to resist the recoil. Sometimes the strain of expecting it gets too great, and the body jerks itself back to ease the blow. If a person fires just at that instant, he will surely fail to hit what he is aiming at.”

“But he gets over this flinching after a while, doesn't he, daddy?”

Mr. Prescott smiled. “I'm afraid he doesn't, old man. I have been shooting a rifle on the range for some years, and I find I'm as likely to flinch as ever. But I have learned not to fire when I flinch, and so save a miss.”

While he talked, Mr. Prescott was arranging for the shooting. He selected a large tree in the rear of the tents and pinned a target to it.

This target was about six inches square. In the center of it was a round black spot about an inch in diameter. This was the “bullseye,” and to hit it counted five. There was a ring about an inch distant from that, and all shots which struck

inside this ring, or upon it, counted four. A second and larger ring, enclosing the first at a distance of an inch, was for the threes; and the balance of the target, outside the three ring, counted two.

Bunty was placed facing the target at a distance of fifteen paces, and the empty gun put into his hand. "Bring the stock to your right shoulder," directed his father, "and raise the right elbow as far as you can. That makes a good, steady support for the butt of the piece. Hold the rifle near the middle with the left hand. Now practice bringing the gun up that way, your right hand at the small of the stock."

The boy did so until the correct handling of the rifle became easy to him. Then they rested for a time. Redbird strolled up and joined them. "Little White Chief shoot?" he asked. "Shoot um Joe Neebish feet; make um dance if he come back."

"I have never thanked you enough for saving Hugo from that man, Redbird," said Mr. Prescott. "The fellow meant mischief. He would have stolen all he could carry."

Redbird shrugged his shoulders. "No talk thanks," he replied. "You my friend; Little White Chief my friend. Enough; Un-nh-hh!"

The shooting lesson was resumed. "Next we'll

try sighting, old man," announced Mr. Prescott. "In target shooting it is very important that one gets the same sight each time. Now look through that peep sight on the stock and get the front sight to stand up straight in it."

"I close my left eye, don't I, daddy?" asked the boy.

"You do not," replied his father. "Shooters nearly all do so, because it's a tradition that has come down from early days. But a person really can see better, while shooting, with both eyes open. And shutting one eye really imposes too much strain on the other. So the habit may be harmful as well as useless. You're going to start right by shooting with both eyes open."

In the next few minutes Buntty learned to see the target and the front sight quite clearly while using both eyes. "Now have just half your front sight appear in the peep; aim so the bullseye sits squarely on top of the sight, with a line of white showing between them," directed his father. Buntty was able to do this after several trials.

Mr. Prescott explained, while they rested again, that the sight must be kept standing erect, as to cant the piece to the right or left meant that the bullet would follow the cant, and strike to the right or left of the bullseye. The line of white between the "bull" and the sight was necessary

because one could not aim directly at the black spot with good results. If he did so, there was danger of raising the sight too high. This would cause the bullets to strike above the mark.

“Next comes the trigger-pull,” said Mr. Prescott, when Bunty asked that the lesson be resumed. “That’s pretty important, too.” He cocked the weapon. “Slip your right forefinger into the trigger guard as far as you can, until the second joint is on the trigger. Then strive to release the catch by squeezing the whole hand, and not moving the fore finger any more than the other fingers.

“No good shot ‘pulls’ the trigger. Pulling it jerks the muzzle of the rifle to one side, and the bullet may miss the target.”

Bunty snapped the empty piece several times by squeezing the trigger, observing all the rules which his father had taught him. At last he was pronounced ready to commence firing, and the rifle, a repeater, was loaded. “Keep cool, old man,” remarked his father; “and when you are ready to fire, hold your breath for an instant. Otherwise your breathing would make the gun wobble.”

So he planted himself firmly, and while his father and Redbird watched the target with keen interest, he took careful aim and fired.

"Where was the sight when you fired?" asked Mr. Prescott at once.

"A little low and a little to the right," returned Bunty promptly. "I tried to hold it right under and squeeze, but it waved over that way on me."

"Was the shot close enough to be a four, do you think?"

"I think so, daddy."

They advanced to the target and found the tiny bullet hole, low and to the right, as Bunty had called it. But it was outside the four ring. The "wave" had been greater than he thought.

"Good work, old man," said his father, clapping him on the shoulder. "You were able to call your first shot, and that's better than if you got a 'bull' and didn't know how you made it. The shot's a five o'clock three."

"What do you mean by 'five o'clock,' daddy?"

"Well, you see, to a shooter the target is like the face of a clock. The bullseye is the center of the dial. If he gets a shot exactly above it, that shot is at "twelve o'clock," corresponding to the twelve on the dial. One directly below the bull is at six; a shot to the right, midway between the top and the bottom, is at three. The corresponding shot, straight across the bullseye, would be, of course, at nine; and so on. Expert shots designate shots in the different parts of the bullseye

itself in the same way—a two o'clock bull, or an eleven o'clock bull, or whatever it may be."

"What's one right in the center, daddy?"

"That's called a 'pinwheel,' son."

Bunty fired a dozen more shots, calling each one correctly until he came to the sixth. When the rifle cracked spitefully on that cartridge, he cried: "Oh, daddy, I flinched! But I couldn't help it, really I couldn't! All of me backed up just as I shot."

"Shut both eyes, too," chuckled Redbird.

But the flinch seemed to have done some good, even though it did cost a miss, for Bunty tried harder, and his last two shots were pretty bullseyes. It was a proud boy who took down the target, folded it carefully, and tucked it away in the pocket of his shirt. "Mr. and Mrs. Pugh will be glad to see this at suppertime," he explained, as indeed they were.

"Try a string, Redbird," invited Mr. Prescott, reloading the gun and putting up a fresh target.

Nothing loath, the Indian rose to his feet and sighted over the weapon. Then he fired five shots so rapidly that the reports seemed scarcely a second apart; yet, when they reached the target, it was to find every one was a bullseye.

"Good shooting, Redbird!" said Mr. Prescott,

heartily, while Bunty looked at the Indian in open-eyed admiration.

“Fair,” admitted the Indian. “Shoot every day, Little White Chief, and you will shoot same.”

Bunty promised himself that he would shoot every day, not because he was envious of Red-bird’s good shooting, but because he had a feeling that some day his ability might prove of value to him. He wanted to know all he could possibly learn, that belonged in any way to the woods.

CHAPTER XIX

WHAT A GOOD SPORTSMAN DOES

Bunty's shooting lessons were continued each day, and he became very proficient. When it was an easy matter for him to hit the bullseye four times out of five at fifteen yards he was moved back to twenty-five yards by his father. There, also, he soon showed skill. A bigger target was put up, and the firing point was, by degrees, set still further back. Presently it was more than one hundred yards away.

Then it became necessary to take the wind into consideration in order to stay on the target. A breeze across the range was quite likely to turn the light bullet out of its course. But in time the boy managed to make correct allowance for the speed of the wind, and to group his shots in or near the bullseye.

"We've about done with target shooting now," announced Mr. Prescott one morning after Bunty had shot very cleverly; "except, of course, to keep from getting rusty. Hitting the bullseye teaches the groundwork. But the things we'll have to

hit in the woods are running and jumping. We see them at unexpected times and places.

“Birds and animals don’t wait until we are ready for them; they go when *they* are ready. So now you will have to learn to shoot quickly as well as accurately. Some ‘wild west’ practice should teach that.”

He gathered a basket of empty tin cans. Standing behind Bunty, so as to avoid danger, he tossed them into the air one at a time for the young marksman to shoot at. Most of the cans came down untouched. Hugo shot too hurriedly, or waited too long in trying to get a “bead” on the whirling object. While so large a mark looked easy to hit, exactly the contrary was the case. The boy had almost emptied his gun before “winging” one of the flying targets.

His average for the first day was one hit out of ten tries; but in three days he was hitting half the cans. Then the average gradually crept up until nine out of ten came down with bullet holes through them.

This kind of shooting was very fascinating and soon Mr. Prescott and Redbird were taking a hand in it. The result was that a lively game grew out of it as they all became more expert.

First, a number of cans, pieces of wood, and stones, none smaller than the palm of a man’s

hand, was collected. Then one of the three would take a position behind and to the right of the other two, who stood with loaded guns, ready to fire.

When the word was given, he would toss one of the targets across in front of the waiting marksmen. The cans were bounded along the ground; but the smaller objects were required to be kept in the air. The marksmen would fire in turn, each choosing every other target. The missing of five sent the marksman back to do the tossing, while the one relieved took his place on the firing line.

They played this game by the hour, applauding each other's good shots, and shouting with laughter when an easy target—usually one of the bounding cans—was missed. Naturally, Mr. Pugh heard of the sport and was soon persuaded to join the firing line. When the popping began over near the tents he usually strolled out to take a hand, carrying his twenty-two, and with a hundred cartridges in his pocket. It was a form of amusement that never became stale, but was a favorite as long as Mr. Prescott and Bunty remained at Englishman's Camp.

The boy was taught revolver and shotgun shooting as well as expertness with the rifle. Training with the latter weapon made the new accomplishments quite easy. Mr. Prescott showed him how

to clean firearms and oil them so that rust would not injure them, and Bunty was held responsible for the condition of his own. Besides the target rifle, a revolver and a light shotgun, Mr. Prescott had given him a hunting rifle big enough to kill bear and deer. Though not firing this so frequently as the other guns, he used it enough to become perfectly familiar with it.

“Old man,” said Mr. Prescott one evening, as they sat in front of the fly, while Redbird tended the glowing camp fire, “you’re a pretty good target shot now. Very few around here are any better. We don’t know what you’ll do as a game shot until you’ve been tested out. But before you go into the woods, you should know the etiquette of the gun.

“Never point a weapon, loaded or unloaded, at any person; and don’t permit anyone to point a weapon at you. Never snap the trigger of a strange gun. It’s the ‘didn’t-know-it-was-loaded’ gun that’s responsible for all the accidents. Don’t walk through the woods with your gun cocked, and don’t bring it toward you by the muzzle. Unload your gun the minute you’re through hunting. A loaded gun has no place in the house.

“Be afraid of a gun. The man who fears a gun never gets careless with it. Don’t go out with a careless hunter. Never fire until you know posi-

tively what you are firing at. This fall, after the season opens, you'll see a good many things that look like deer; and you'll hear noises in the bushes that will sound like deer. But *know* it's a deer before you fire. Many a man is carrying a lifelong regret because he didn't *know* when he blazed away; he just *supposed*.

"There; I've given you quite a lecture. Do you think you can remember all of it?"

"I'll try, daddy," replied Bunty, seriously, "for I want to become a good sportsman."

"Un-nh-hh! Good sportsman now!" said Red-bird, tossing another stick onto the fire.

CHAPTER XX

THE FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

I have forgotten to mention Bunty's Fourth of July, which occurred some weeks before the events narrated in the last chapter, and after they had been in the northland about a fortnight. So we will go back to the holiday.

"Bunty, what day is this?" inquired Mr. Prescott when they arose one bright, sunshiny morning.

The boy pondered a moment. "I am not sure whether it is Friday or Saturday, daddy," he said.

"What day of the month is it?"

"Well, this is July, and I know it's after the first—Why, daddy, it's the Fourth!" and he clapped his hands delightedly.

His father smiled. "Yes, son, it's Independence Day."

Bunty's face became overcast with gloom. "And we're twelve miles from a firecracker, aren't we, daddy? And no baseball game, either! It'll hardly seem like the Fourth, will it?"

Mr. Prescott winked mysteriously. "Well, now, we don't know. Let's wait and see what the day will bring forth."

Bunty clapped his hands again. He knew that a treat of some description was in store for him.

They spent the morning in a ramble along the river, returning with good appetites to the special dinner which Mrs. Pugh had prepared in honor of the day. Bunty was wondering, afterwards, what form the celebration would take, when the Fox family, in single file as on the occasion of their first visit, came marching into the clearing.

Greetings were exchanged, and the visitors took seats on the grass or on stools in the shade of the fly. They talked of various things: The new barn; some down-river campers; the bear who had surprised "Red" Fox without a gun on the way home from the huckleberry patch. But during all the talk Bunty kept his eyes fixed on a stout, thick, hickory stick which "Silver" Fox carried.

At last he could restrain himself no longer. "'Scuse me, Silver," he said politely, "but what is that stick you are carrying?"

"That's a baseball bat," returned "Silver," shyly. "Show him the ball, Roundy."

"Little Round" Fox promptly produced the

ball from his pocket and tossed it to Bunty. It was the homemade yarn ball with which the boys played at home, but it had been covered with some sort of hide for this occasion. The cover was fastened with large, irregular stitches. Hugo bounced the rather irregular sphere on the ground, and it responded well, for it had a core of rubber.

"Let's play!" he cried, and the others, especially the Foxes, arose so quickly that it seemed such a proposition was all they were waiting for.

There were not enough to "choose up" into two teams, so they played two-old-cat. Every boy knows what that is: Two batters alternate between home and first base. When one is retired he takes the last place in the field, and the others move up one position to fill the vacancy.

Everybody played. Mr. Prescott soon found that he had not lost his old skill in the field or at the bat. Redbird did not bat very strongly, but his fleetness of foot generally permitted him to reach first ahead of the ball. Mr. Fox proved to be a hard hitter and his long drives brought much applause from the other players. The young Foxes played a fair game, as did Bunty.

Mr. Pugh sauntered over presently, hands in pockets, and joined the fun. He had been a famous cricketer in England during his younger days,

and now his cleverness in "bowling" stood him in good stead. The bowler is the cricket pitcher, and Pugh, pitching underhanded as the bowler is required to do, threw the ball in wide, sweeping curves, which were very hard to hit.

By common consent, after he had batted a few times, he was left in the box to do the pitching. Bunty tired a little after the hard work of running back and forth, so he played first base most of the afternoon and made some fine catches. Everyone was surprised when the sun dropped to the tops of the tall trees on the west of the clearing. The afternoon had sped swiftly and pleasantly. The Fox family departed for home, but promised to return, on Mr. Prescott's invitation, after supper.

The stars were coming out when they filed into the clearing again. Redbird had a famous fire going, and logs were ranged about it for seats. Some other preparations had been made by his smiling father, which had filled Bunty with anticipation.

When the Foxes were all seated—the boys with some sly jostling and crowding—Mr. Prescott brought out a big, brown-paper parcel. On being opened to a chorus of delighted cries, it was found to contain fireworks of every description: Sky-

rockets, pinwheels, fire crackers, Roman candles—in fact, all the inventions intended to produce the most glare and noise for the money invested.

Mr. and Mrs. Pugh joined the happy circle and assisted loyally in the celebration. It was to Pugh that Mr. Prescott appealed when everything had exploded or fizzed or glared, and asked whether it was safe to send up a balloon.

The balloon was of tissue paper, a gorgeous affair of red and white, and it stood fully six feet in height. Everyone hung breathlessly on the Englishman's decision, and there was rejoicing when he said: "The rain of the past few days has soaked the swamps, so there's no danger. Yes, send it up!"

A sturdy cheer burst forth when the balloon, filled almost to bursting with the hot air from an oily rag, rose straight above the clearing. Up and up it went, until a gentle current of air from the west caught it. Then it sailed gracefully across the river, far into the barrens. They watched the twinkling light until it was no larger than a star . . . until it had winked out in the distance. Then everybody rose with a sigh. The Fourth of July celebration was over.

The "Au Sable Baseball Team" really dated from that day. Mr. Prescott sent to Detroit for

several league balls, a catcher's chest protector, mask and mitt, a first baseman's mitt, gloves for the infielders—the outfielders made their own—and for several wagon-tongue bats. When the Fox family came over a week later, the outfit had arrived and the nine was organized.

“Red” Fox was a natural catcher, and went behind the bat. The Englishman was unanimously chosen pitcher. Bunty, despite his small stature, was placed on first, and did wonders with the big glove. Fox senior covered second, for he could catch a thrown ball or a fly with the best of them, and Mr. Prescott, who played shortstop, promised to assist on the grounders. Redbird was stationed on third. “Young Black Fox”—“Blackie,” his brothers called him—went to left field, “Silver” to center and “Roundy” to right.

Twice a week after that, during the summer, the “Au Sables” met at the clearing for practice. A diamond was laid out in the upper end, with home plate near the fringe of trees on the west. The rough spots were smoothed over or worn down. In a few weeks the strangely assorted team was as good as most amateur nines.

Mr. Prescott had feared, before leaving home, that the pine barrens would prove so lonesome that Bunty would long for his playmates in De-

troit. After the organization of the team, however, if not before it, he knew this fear was vain. Between baseball, fishing, shooting, and timber-cutting the days were actually too short for the healthful, pleasurable activities crowded into them. Bunty often spoke of Detroit and the girls and boys there; but he did not dream of being homesick. There was no time for that.

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE HUCKLEBERRY SWAMP

Several days after the Fourth of July celebration the Englishman invited them to go huckleberrying. The swamp, he said, was but a short distance away, and they could get many quarts in a day. Eager for the experience, they accepted.

At six o'clock the next morning they started. The Englishman had hitched his two horses to a light wagon and into this the four of them—Pugh, Redbird, Mr. Prescott and Bunty—clambered. There was little space left, for the wagon also contained a big basket of lunch and various tin pails, pans and other receptacles for the berries.

The Indian had a stout stick, five feet in length and forked at one end, tied diagonally across his back. Mr. Pugh, before starting, had buckled on a heavy revolver. When Hugo asked what the stick was for, the Indian smiled and said, "You see, mebbe."

They drove west out of the clearing in the direction of Grayling, and after crossing the creek where the wagon had become mired the first day,

turned to the south. A two-mile drive along a sandy trail brought them to the marsh.

Despite the early hour, there were a dozen or more horses and rigs tied in a grove of hardwood trees on the edge of the huckleberry lands. The marsh contained but a few dead stubs and no jack pines, so it was possible to see some distance across it. Everywhere one could make out the straw hats of the men and the sunbonnets of the women and girl pickers as they sat by the low bushes and plucked the dusky, blue berries with swift fingers.

Most of the pickers seemed to be acquainted and called one to another, or paused to chat as they went back and forth emptying their pails. Pugh and Redbird answered many greetings. Presently Bunty heard some one call "Hello, Little White Chief!" and looked up to see the Fox boys, some distance away, wave friendly hands.

The forenoon slipped by quickly. Bunty soon found that the berries were biggest and thickest where the vines were nourished by rotting logs and stumps. So he went from one little mound, caused by decaying wood, to another. The mucky ground was swampy, and sprung beneath his feet. Redbird kept close by him.

They stopped frequently to chat—that is, Bunty did, while the Indian answered without pausing

—and so the boy's forenoon contribution to the common hoard was but six quarts. Redbird and Mr. Pugh and Mr. Prescott, who worked together, had done much better, and several of the vessels in the wagon were full.

There was an hour's rest for dinner, during which father and son were introduced to the pickers who had assembled in the grove to eat and rest. Most of them had come from Grayling, though there were settlers who had driven from their lonely cabins fifteen or twenty miles away. They had risen with the first streak of dawn, snatched hasty breakfasts, and had been in the berry patch since seven o'clock.

There was much good-natured banter among the thirty or more pickers, and this finally resulted in wrestling bouts among the younger men. "Red" Fox proved to be the champion. Cheered by the excited yelling of the men and the hand-clappings of the women, he threw two Grayling youths in succession. A young settler from down the Au Sable proved a harder nut to crack, but "Red," after a lively struggle, managed to put his shoulders to the "mat," also.

"Roundy" wanted to wrestle Buntz but before his invitation could be accepted, "Silver" had seized his pudgy brother, and they were at it, hammer and tongs. There were shouts of en-

couraging laughter when the plump boy's weight nearly upset "Silver;" but the latter wriggled cleverly out of the dangerous hold. They tugged and swayed for some minutes without much advantage on either side. Then "Silver," dropping quickly, pulled the puffing "Roundy" down by the knees, rolled him onto his back, and sat upon him in triumph.

The youngster took his defeat sweet-temperedly. "Anyway," he panted, as he scrambled up again, "I picked—puff—twelve quarts—puff—puff—this morning and you—puff—only got eight!" This brought him a round of applause at which "Silver," called "Quicksilver" by some because he worked so slowly, had the grace to blush.

Redbird still wore the forked stick when they went out to the patch again. Bunty noted that some of the other men also carried stout clubs. He was soon to learn why.

They had been hard at the picking for an hour, and Bunty was moving toward a patch of thick, heavily-laden bushes when he heard a curious sound. It was a hum and a whir in one, accompanied by a low, rapid clicking. The whole somehow suggested great danger, and though he did not know what it meant, he stopped in fright. The noise, apparently, was quite close; yet, aside from

the fact that it came from the ground, he could not be sure of the direction otherwise.

With the very first note, Redbird advanced swiftly ahead of Bunty, at the same time slipping the forked stick off his back. "Stand still," he commanded, in a low, fierce tone. It was so different from his usual pleasant way of speaking, that surprise if nothing else would have kept the boy rooted in his tracks.

Standing motionless, stick poised with the fork downward, in his right hand, the Indian stooped forward. His intent gaze covered every inch of the ground before them. Presently he grunted softly, as if with satisfaction. His voice caused the sound to increase in intensity, and Bunty felt himself grow weak with fear.

He saw what the Indian had discovered, a flat, spear-shaped head, moving gently back and forth, while unwinking, wicked eyes watched them; a thin mouth, from which the sharp tongue darted; a thick, scaly body, folded in narrowing curves, one on the other, and a tail, ending in a series of light brown knobs, which vibrated rapidly. Bunty felt rather than knew that he was facing a rattlesnake.

What followed was done so rapidly that the boy could scarcely comprehend it. Redbird held the stick in front of the snake which struck like a

flash of lightning. Before the reptile could settle back into its coils again, from which, only, it can strike, the Indian had pinned the triangular head down with the forked stick. The prongs stuck into the ground and prevented the snake from escaping by moving either forward or backward.

The rattler straightened out and struggled frantically to get free, but the merciless stick held it safely. Redbird's brown hand seized the thrashing tail. Then he pulled out the stick, and lifting the snake by the tail, began swinging it at arm's length about his head.

Next he reversed the motion suddenly, using the strong, quick jerk one employs to crack a whip. The strain was too much for the whirling rattler. The head snapped off as cleanly as though cut with a knife and flew some distance away. Out came Redbird's heavy hunting weapon, and a single stroke severed the twelve rattles. These he extended to the trembling boy, after he had sent the writhing body after the head.

There was little more berry picking for Buntz that afternoon. His father, hurrying up, saw how pale the boy was, and insisted that he stay in the shade of the grove. Again he tried to thank Redbird for his defense of his son, and

again the Indian shrugged his shoulders and said gruffly that he wanted no thanks for serving his friends.

Nevertheless, the other pickers made quite a hero of him, and he was showered with praise for his quick, cool work. Bunty made him come to the grove also, and the picking for their party was done thereafter by Mr. Prescott and the Englishman. But at sundown, nevertheless, all the vessels they had brought were filled.

The danger of being bitten, Redbird told Bunty, was slight unless a person actually stepped on a snake. Then escape was difficult, and death almost sure. When women or girls heard the warning rattle, they retreated, screaming. This brought the men on the run, because they hoped to catch the snake still coiled. A coiled snake was easy to find and to dispose of with a shot or a blow from one of the clubs. But an uncoiled rattler usually glided away and was lost in the long grass, to menace the pickers again later.

Redbird stated proudly that his method of killing rattlers—snapping their heads off—was his own, and not practiced by anyone else.

CHAPTER XXII

DOWN THE AU SABLE

“Bunty,” said Mr. Prescott that evening, “if it wasn’t for one thing, we’d take a trip down the Au Sable. As it is, though, I’m afraid we’ll have to wait until it’s cooler.”

“What’s that one thing, daddy?”

“Too many mosquitoes; they’d fairly eat us up along the river.”

“Skeeto no bite,” put in Redbird; “I fix um.”

“How?”

“Make um medicine. You try um.”

“If you have anything that will really keep them off, Redbird, we’ll start this week. It’s a two weeks’ trip, clear to the mouth, and it is to take the place of a National Guard camp for me this year. Make your medicine to-morrow and we’ll see how it works.”

Redbird was off into the woods next day at sunrise. He came back with a big bundle of plants, which he crushed and compounded in various cups. The result was a greenish fluid with a strong though not unpleasant smell.

Mr. Prescott smeared it onto his face and hands, and headed for the damp, shady places along the water. The mosquitoes, which within a few days had become very thick, advanced in a humming cloud to meet him. But at the odor of Redbird's mixture they retreated hastily, after circling around for a few moments. It was plain that they did not like it. One or two blundered against his face, but made no attempt to alight. To give the mixture a fair test, he strolled along the river for half an hour. There were thousands of the little pests all about, but not a one molested him. Redbird's "medicine" was a success.

Preparations were at once begun for the down-river trip, which had long been a project in Mr. Prescott's mind. First, there was the question of a boat. Mr. Pugh had one built especially for such a journey, and which had been twice to the mouth of the Au Sable. Mr. Prescott was easily persuaded to employ it.

Pugh called it, English fashion, a "punt." It was about sixteen feet long, shallow, and some thirty-eight inches wide. It was pointed at both ends, and the ends "flared" somewhat. That is, they did not lie flat on the surface of the water, but rose from it a little. Such a craft did not "stick its nose in," and so floated more rapidly than a flat-bottomed boat would have.

Each end was decked over to make a seat, and there was a third seat in the middle. Beneath the middle seat was the "well." Two water-tight partitions the full width of the boat and eighteen inches apart, formed the sides of the well, and the seat, which could be removed, was the cover. In the bottom of the boat, inside the well, several holes had been bored with a large auger. These holes were screened over, but they, of course, permitted the water to rise as high in the well as the boat was low in the stream.

The well was intended to keep alive fish that had been caught, and served its purpose perfectly. A fish dropped into it was confined in cold, running water from the stream. The ends of the boat furnished good storage places for other food. They were water-tight and would remain dry, because of the flare, even if a little water came into the craft.

"The current is plenty swift—a good six miles an hour—so you won't need to row," said the Englishman. "All you need is a pole to steer with." Mr. Prescott knew that the river, on downstream trips, was navigated by the pole, but to be on the safe side he took a paddle as well.

What to take in the way of food was the next problem. After much thought and discussion, they decided on bread and hard-tack, canned to-

matoes, potted chicken and tongue, canned pork and beans, and a few cans of peaches, dried beef and a strip of bacon, eggs, butter, condensed milk and cream, salt and pepper, and coffee and potatoes. Their fishing rods would furnish them daily with the principal part of their meals.

Toilet articles and changes of clothing were packed in a valise by Mr. Prescott for himself and Bunty. A few cooking utensils were put in, as well as a rifle and shotgun, with ammunition for each. The two blanket rolls, each made up of a whole shelter tent with pins and poles, a rubber blanket, their oilskin suits, and two woolen blankets, were added. Each of the voyagers filled his match safe, and saw that his oilcloth packet of these useful articles was in his pocket.

It was not necessary to ask Redbird if he were going; everybody took it for granted, including Redbird himself, that he was. His preparations were quite simple. He rolled two blankets in a large piece of canvas, and was ready. "No rain, no tent," he explained. "Rain, cut um sticks, put up tent."

Everything was carried down to the boat, and the work of loading the craft was begun. It looked dubious at first; there was such a big heap of "dunnage," as Pugh called it, and so little space. But Redbird proved a skillful packer, and in time

everything was aboard. Perishable provisions were stored under the rear seat; other things were tucked away so as to use every bit of room and still leave places for the voyagers to stand and sit.

The boat did not sit level in the stream; the stern was lower than the bow. This was as they had planned. It made the craft ride the water much better.

It was a beautiful, sunshiny morning. Redbird, pole in hand, took his place in the bow; Bunty sat down amidship; and Mr. Prescott, taking up the paddle, located himself in the stern.

Mr. and Mrs. Pugh came out to see them off, the latter running to the house at the last moment to return with a huckleberry pie for their dinner. Good-byes were said; and a shove from pole and paddle launched them fairly into the swift current.

The men had to keep close watch to avoid accident. The stream was filled with rocks, jagged fellows standing several feet out of water, and others, much more dangerous, concealed just beneath the surface; and with sunken logs; and with overturned trees. It was necessary to dodge back and forth almost constantly in order to find a clear pathway.

They passed, one by one, the fishing camps—solid log cabins overhanging the water. Several were occupied, and the fishermen wished them

good luck and a pleasant voyage. Below the last cabin a chorus of shrill cheers came from the bank. The Fox family had come down from their home, a few rods to the west, to speed them on their way. "Red" Fox emptied his rifle in the air; "Blackey" let both barrels of his shotgun go with a thunderous roar. "Silver's" dog, a hound with flapping ears, raised his nose and howled vigorously.

The voyagers waved their hats in response. Then the river swept them around a wide bend to the east, and the last outpost of civilization was lost to view. Ahead loomed the grim wilderness, and they greeted it with light hearts.

CHAPTER XXIII

GLIDING ACROSS A STATE

The journey on which they had embarked was no mean one. Their destination was the mouth of the Au Sable where, flanked on either side by the twin cities of Oscoda and Au Sable, the river empties into Lake Huron. The distance, according to Pugh and Fox, was three hundred miles. It was much less as the crow flies; but the river was very crooked.

It twists and turns upon itself, swinging far to the north as well; and though the current is very speedy, three hundred miles is a long way. Floating steadily during the daylight hours would allow the completion of the trip in a week; but it was not Mr. Prescott's idea so to travel. There was no need for haste and they would not hurry.

With the Foxes left behind, Redbird pulled off his slouch hat and threw it into the bottom of the boat. It was his way of saying that civilization was no longer there to bother. Thereafter, all during the voyage, his inky black hair hung unfettered about his face.

The management of the boat, as they became accustomed to it, was less of a problem. There were as many logs and stones in the way as ever; but one sure thrust of paddle or pole now served where four or five such efforts had seemed necessary to turn the boat before. Occasionally, where a tree had fallen from the bank, they passed beneath it, and everybody crouched low to avoid being swept overboard by the trunk.

The quick turns of the stream often plunged them into eddies—little whirlpools lying in wait behind projecting banks. Sometimes they could be avoided; but again, the boat would cut into the heart of the circling waters, and be turned end for end. The first such experience was startling, and the boat tipped dangerously as they tried to keep her bow downstream. Afterwards they allowed the whirlpool to have its way, sitting perfectly still meanwhile. Then, when the grasp of the eddy weakened, they poled leisurely out again.

The country was wildly picturesque. Occasionally the banks of the stream rose straight up to a height of two hundred feet or more. Bunty noticed that down the face of some of these banks was a scar of white sand with no vegetation upon it. He asked Redbird the meaning.

“Roll um logs down there,” exclaimed the Indian, “so river carry um to big saw.”

Little streams joined the Au Sable frequently. They welled from springs in which the water was clear and sparkling and ice cold. It seemed impossible to feel thirsty and not find a spring within five minutes in which that thirst could be quenched.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock they began looking for a suitable place to land for dinner. Within half an hour it was located—a bit of smooth turf beneath a big tree, the usual spring bubbling up a few feet away.

A little fire of dry sticks was built, and on it the bacon was fried and the coffee boiled. It was decided that the eggs, as long as they lasted, should be kept for breakfast. The huckleberry pie was served for dessert and was very good—so good that Bunty said as his father helped him to a second piece: “Daddy, I don’t mind the fright that rattlesnake gave me, now!”

They rested for an hour, during which time Bunty, after arranging himself a bed with the skill of a true woodsman, slept soundly. Mr. Prescott took a nap, too, but Redbird wandered silently through the woods.

They embarked again, the boat speeding buoyantly down the brown water. In midafternoon there was another halt, and the party climbed a hill by the water’s edge. This hill reared itself to

a height of three hundred feet. Mr. Prescott took his camera, and from the summit got some striking pictures: the winding river far below, and the lonesome blue hills all about.

From this place on, the river ran between high banks, shutting off the sunlight quite early. With the coming of this semi-twilight, the "drag" was thrown overboard, slackening the speed of the boat so that trout fishing was possible. The drag consisted of a heavy stone, enmeshed in stout wires which, twisted closely together into a single cable, had been made fast to the stern of the boat. The cable was about fourteen feet long.

Grubs and worms collected from under rotten logs were used as bait, which the trout took more eagerly than flies. Soon they had a fine mess of trout for supper, besides a dozen big fellows in the well of the boat for next day.

A bright lookout was now kept for a camp ground. One was soon selected—a tongue of smooth, firm sand, not far from the water. The boat was beached and securely anchored. Tents were pitched, beds made, and dry wood secured for a fire. Never did a meal smell or taste better than the one which they jointly prepared.

After it had been eaten and the dishes washed in the creek, they lounged about the camp fire and talked for an hour. But the journey had been

tiring, despite its pleasures, and the beds of fir branches proved tempting. By nine o'clock they were rolled in their blankets.

The humming of the mosquitoes made Buntty nervous, and it was some time before he got to sleep. He was not bitten, for Redbird's "medicine," which he had rubbed on his face and hands before retiring, kept them at a respectful distance. But their keen, thin, never-ending song was far from being a lullaby.

It did not prove unpleasant to lie awake, however. There were many noises to keep him company. The soft rush of the water, which seemed to whisper to him with a friendly voice; the grave note of the hoot owl; the drumming of a lone partridge; and the occasional faint cry of some other wild, feathered thing from far away. Once he heard the bark of a prowling fox.

The river was a busy place the second day and during the balance of their journey. It fairly swarmed with waterfowl. Blue heron—long, gaunt fellows with thin necks and awkward, pipe-stem legs—stood meditatively in the shallows until the boat came around a near-by bend. Then they took wing lazily, flying only to the next bend before settling to the water again. Scores of wild ducks quarreled and squawked, but sprang to arrowlike flight on seeing the voyagers.

Two plump brown animals, sunning themselves on the bank, scuttled quickly away when Bunty cried, "See the woodchucks!" Redbird did not agree, for he said smilingly, "Meadow beaver." Later, they swept through a broken beaver dam and halted the boat to marvel at the cunningness of its construction.

CHAPTER XXIV

A MIDNIGHT VISITOR

That afternoon they saw the first deer of the journey. A quick curve about a heavily-wooded point showed them half a mile of wide, shallow water ahead. Scarce a stone's throw away, a magnificent buck with great horns stood facing them. He had been taken completely by surprise. They were down the wind from him, so he could not scent them; and he had not heard them, for the boat had been gliding silently for some moments, during which time no one had spoken.

He seemed fairly dazed at the sight of them, and stood motionless until the boat had traveled its own length. Then he whirled and fled grandly down the stream. Either he was too frightened to think of the bank, or else disdained to hide himself at once in the thicket.

Bunty yelled excitedly as the buck splashed ahead of them in great leaps. Redbird caught the spirit of the chase and poled in frantic pursuit. Mr. Prescott seized his camera and made breathless efforts to secure a picture of the forest

monarch, sitting astride the bow meanwhile.

Just as he snapped the camera with a cry of triumph, the buck tired of the sport. He veered to the right bank and scrambled out of the water. The bank was at least twenty feet high, and steep. But it did not bother the animal, who climbed it without slackening speed, and disappeared in the scrub.

“Daddy, wasn’t he just splendid!” burst out the boy.

“Indeed he was, old man. I don’t believe he was frightened much, either. Just having a little fun with us. I hope my picture of him is all right.”

“New way to shoot um,” grinned Redbird. “Point little black box, say ‘Click!’ and got um. Un-nh-hh!”

The picture, when developed, proved to be one of the best of Mr. Prescott’s collection, and he and Bunty are very proud of it.

A routine similar to the first day was carried out that evening. The “drag” was thrown out when it came time for the trout to bite, and they set to work busily with their rods. Again the fish rose readily. When enough had been caught, a lookout was kept for a landing-place. A sandpit near the water was the choice once more. There was a spring and plenty of wood near by.

The sky was cloudless, and Mr. Prescott's suggestion that they sleep without tents was received by Bunty with delight. So they made their beds in the open, with the sky for a canopy and the stars for bedroom candles. The shelter tents added two thicknesses of covering, and these proved very acceptable, for the night was sharply cool.

The mosquitoes were not so thick as they had been, and their song no longer bothered the young voyager. After snuggling down in his warm bed he lost no time in getting to sleep. His father and Redbird soon followed his example.

It seemed to Bunty that he had not been asleep a minute when something caused him to start up, broad awake. For a moment, though, he did not know where he was. Then the steady lapping of the water, the twinkling stars, and the outlines of the hills recalled their situation.

When his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he noted that his father and Redbird were also sitting bolt upright in their beds, listening. What were they listening for? He could hear no unusual sound. Still, he felt that something out of the ordinary had awakened them.

Ah! A stealthy step on the gravel! He turned his head toward the river and strained his eyes to pierce the gloom. Gradually he made out, against

the shadow of the hill across the river, another shadow, stooping, irregular. . . . A man was bending over their boat exploring its contents with cautious hands!

The unwelcome visitor made a hissing sound, soon repeated. So grimly careful was it that Bunt was almost tempted to cry aloud. Another hiss; there must be two of them, whispering together! Only by a strong effort he kept his teeth from chattering.

Meanwhile, Redbird was cautiously getting out of bed. The pile of firewood was close by, and he groped quietly until his hand closed on a thick billet. With an ear-splitting yell he rushed at the stooping figure by the boat. Then he struck with all his might.

The Indian's first blow was greeted by a grunt almost comical in its utter surprise. The marauder straightened up, to be pelted with a perfect shower of language and thumps: "Go on away (Thump!) ole fool! What you want! (Thump, thump!) Big thief! (Thump!) I show you. (Thump, thump!) Take that! (*Thump!*) Smell 'round camp, hey? (Thump!) Git!" (Thump, thump, thump!)

Grunting, sniffing and shuffling, the thief "got." With the Indian at his heels, still belaboring him, he passed swiftly between Bunt and the stars—

a great rough, stooping man. . . . No, not a man at all! Why it must be a bear!

It was a bear, and a painfully bewildered one. Bruin did not dream of resistance. The attack upon him had been so sudden and so savage that all the fight was knocked out of him. The only idea left in his thick skull was to get away as quickly as possible. Probably he said to himself as he hurried noisily up the steep bank from the sandpit: "Was ever a poor bear treated so harshly before? All I wanted was a midnight lunch; a fellow *must* eat! And then this yelling man-person, with a big stick, beats me. I'm going right away from here!" And he went so rapidly that he was soon out of reach.

Mr. Prescott had a light kindled when Redbird came back, swinging his club. The Indian was chuckling so merrily that father and son laughed in sympathy. "Give um bear what-for, un-nh-hh?" he said. "He wanted um bread and eggs, mebbe. No get; sore head; no come back!"

They examined the contents of the boat, to find nothing missing and nothing damaged. The bear's sniffing—which Hugo had mistaken for whispering—had awakened them before he had time to reach the coveted provisions. He had pawed things about somewhat, and that was all.

"Weren't you afraid he'd bite you, Redbird?"



With an ear-splitting yell Redbird rushed at the stooping figure by the boat. Then he struck with all his might.

asked Bunty, when they had discussed the midnight visitor for some time.

“No,” said the Indian. “Hungry bear, look out; he bad. This one no hungry; fat. He big coward.”

They went back to bed presently, but for a long time Bunty lay awake, looking up at the stars. Frequently he laughed to himself as he recalled what a sheepish figure Bruin cut as he retreated like a whipped schoolboy before the club and tongue of the vengeful Redbird.

CHAPTER XXV

A RAINY DAY ON THE RIVER

Buntz examined eagerly the tracks on the sand next morning, as well as the hillside up which Bruin crawled his hasty way. The boy followed his trail through the bushes to the top, in the fanciful hope of seeing the animal again. The shaggy fellow seemed such a human sort of bear! But he was not in sight; probably he was far away, nursing some very sore bones.

"I would give a good deal for a picture of the old rascal while you were driving him off," said Mr. Prescott to the Indian. "He looked so disgusted with himself, as he hunched his shoulders and ran!"

"You get some bear-picture," promised Redbird. "Bear thick through here. No hunt much, so no afraid."

Sure enough, a few days later Mr. Prescott did get a photograph. The subject was a big black fellow who was sharpening his claws on a tree beside the river. So plump and well fed and contented with the world was he that he did not

deign to retreat until after the camera had clicked.

The third, fourth and fifth days were like the first two days of the trip. The sun shone warmly and the nights were cool and clear. The boat went along famously; all had learned to manage it. Even Bunty took the paddle or the pole and threaded his way downstream for miles at a stretch.

They lived up to the true sportsman's creed: To kill only for food. They studied the wild things of the forest and stream and took pictures which were a more lasting source of satisfaction than any mere slaughter could possibly have been. "Live and let live" was their motto as they floated swiftly across the great, silent, fragrant state.

The morning of the sixth day was misty. Before, the fog which blanketed the stream in the early hours had always been eaten up by the sun. But this day it persisted; the sun was hidden. "Rain," announced Redbird tersely, as he sniffed the warm, moist breeze.

They made all snug for bad weather. The food supply was repacked. As it was now much smaller in bulk, the voyagers found it possible to stow it all in the space under the seats. One poncho covered the bundle of blankets and tents; the other was given to Redbird for his protection. Mr. Prescott and Hugo put on their oilskins and boots.

They started. As the fog was still thick, the drag was thrown out, and they crept along at a pace rather vexing, after the headlong rush of the other days.

The expected rain began to fall, lightly and hesitatingly at first. Soon it settled into a beating storm. There was no lightning, and the wind did not blow strongly; but the big drops pattered down persistently. The brown water turned to gray beneath their tapping.

The river was deserted. The clamoring waterfowl had sought shelter; even the trout did not leap and play, but stayed beneath the surface. They were busy gorging themselves on the worms and grubs which the countless little streams brought down to them.

About ten o'clock the fog lifted and they were able to take off the drag. The boat shot forward buoyantly; it seemed much better than crawling along at a snail's pace. But the journey was still an uncomfortable one. The air had gradually grown cooler. The biting rain splashed in their faces, and tried to force its way inside the oilskins. Bunty felt as though he were just on the edge of a big shiver.

At noon Mr. Prescott took counsel with Redbird. "Shall we stop?" he asked. "We could build a fire and wait for the storm to wear itself out."

Redbird thought for some time before answering. Then he made what was a long speech for him. "No stop," he said; "go on, mebbe. Town—Mio—not very far away. Dunno; rain change river. But we go fast. Find town to-night, mebbe, or to-morrow."

He looked steadily ahead, as if to pierce the rain curtain that overhung the river. Then he sniffed the air. "Heap rain yet," he said.

"Well, Bunt, what do you think about it?" asked Mr. Prescott. "Partners should consult together."

Bunt pondered gravely, as the Indian had done. He knew that a wet shelter tent is a cramped and cheerless place; their blankets would gather moisture. It would be very uncomfortable to make camp. And he was not very comfortable now.

Besides, Redbird's mention of a town had roused his interest. A settlement now would be a novelty worth seeing. Better plunge ahead, with the hope that each bend of the river would bring it into view, than be cooped up in camp, doing nothing but waiting.

"Let's keep going, daddy."

"Keep going it is," smiled Mr. Prescott.

So, hoping to secure shelter or outrun the storm, they kept on. For dinner they had bread,

a can of pork and beans, and a can of peaches. The meal was disposed of as the boat plunged ahead. One of the trio steered while the others ate.

The afternoon was a miserable one. The rain fell without slackening. Mr. Prescott and Redbird were worried for fear the exposure would prove harmful to Bunty. But the boy tried to keep his good spirits, even though he was somewhat chilled. Here and there the rain had soaked through until he was quite wet.

On they went. The afternoon waned, and early dusk began settling down. Still the rain fell heavily. Soon it would be dark and unsafe to go farther. Reluctantly they began looking for a landing place.

"We'll have to stop somewhere beyond that point ahead," declared Mr. Prescott. He nodded at a heavily wooded tongue of land which thrust itself out into the stream.

They swung around the point. Mr. Prescott was steering and Redbird was busying himself with the drag. "Daddy, daddy!" called Hugo, excitedly. "What's that ahead?"

Straining their eyes through the rainy gloom, they saw the outlines of a bridge across the stream.

"Mio!" cried Redbird joyously.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE "WHITE WATER"

With a gallant cheer the voyagers swung under the bridge and dropped their anchor. All was bustle, for brisk movement would fight off chills. Blankets and clothing were gathered up, and they hastened off toward town at a dog trot.

The village was about a half mile from the river. The lamps had not yet been lighted in the straggling main street, but they easily found the one hotel. Soon a famous fire was roaring in the big stove in the office, and the travelers and their blankets were steaming. A ring of curious residents stood about, occasionally asking a question.

Supper, a hot bath and a rubdown followed in rapid succession for Bunty. Before eight o'clock he was snugly tucked in bed beneath the roof, on which the rain drummed loudly. But now he was under shelter and the storm had a cozy sound. The rubdown had left him in a delightful glow, and he felt strong and rested.

Mr. Prescott's fear that the exposure would

have a bad effect on his son was unfounded. The night's good sleep fully restored him, and he was anxious to continue the journey. The sun was shining with a warm brilliance; everything seemed fresh and newly-washed. There was not a cloud in the sky, and Redbird declared with conviction: "No more rain!"

The bill at the hotel was settled and purchases made of bread, butter and eggs. With their arms full of bundles, the voyagers returned to the river, accompanied by half the population of Mio. They found the boat undisturbed, though with some water in it from the rain. This was bailed out; the drag was lifted; and with cries of "Good luck!" from their new friends, the party swung out into the river and was off again.

The journey was continued much as it had been before the storm. But the character of the river changed. The banks, in places, were clothed with great pine trees which had so far escaped the woodsman's axe. But the section was being lumbered, and there were many floating logs, all headed for the sawmills at the mouth of the Au Sable.

Numerous logs had sunk during former years, and these had resulted in the building up of little islands in the stream. The big timbers, one end of which usually projected above the surface,

caught floating driftwood and grasses. Seeds which lodged in the masses took root in sand bars which were formed. In a few years the island, crowned with tiny jack pines, reared its head bravely.

Strangely enough, they saw no person, though there were evidences in the shape of the newly-cut logs that the wilderness was now inhabited. Once they heard the distant whistle of a locomotive on a logging road.

Bunty was steering on the afternoon of the tenth day. The current did not seem so strong and they were gliding along gently, talking and laughing together. The river was narrow and quite deep. A sound gradually thrust itself on their attention. It was low at first, but increased in volume as they went forward. They paused in their talk to listen. There was a puzzled look on Redbird's face.

"Sounds like a fall," said Mr. Prescott, as they swept around a great curve.

With the words, Redbird's face cleared for a moment. He went forward and took the pole from Bunty's hands. A look of concern had replaced the puzzlement. "Back in middle, Little White Chief," he directed; "get paddle, Big Chief. Heap trouble."

"What is it, Redbird?" queried Mr. Prescott.

“ ‘The White Water.’ Look!’”

Just ahead, the river had spread to three times its normal width. It was now almost a rifle shot from shore to shore. The current ran like a mill race. The shallow water was fretted by huge boulders, stranded logs and heaps of driftwood. Islands dotted its unquiet bosom. As far as the eye could see, the stream was white with the foam of its own hurrying fury.

There was no quiet current anywhere, and a safe passage seemed out of the question. So fierce was the hurly-burly that they were sure to be overturned. So, at least, believed Mr. Prescott. Redbird, standing pole in hand in the bow, looked far from confident. But it was too late to withdraw. They were in for it.

“How much of this, Redbird?” shouted Mr. Prescott. The roar of the waters made hearing difficult.

“Six-seven mile,” replied the Indian. “Here we go; look out!” And they plunged into the foam.

The trip was gloriously exciting. They had no time to choose a course or to think what to do next. Their boat was the plaything of the waters. Redbird plunged swiftly right and left with the pole, and Mr. Prescott seconded him with the

paddle. But the obstacles were so thick that all of them could not be avoided.

Once they pelted swiftly into a flat rock, just below the surface. The boat stuck for a moment in the center; then the current rapidly whirled it end for end. Their experience with eddies helped them now, for they made no movement. Each held himself in instant readiness to throw his weight where it was most needed.

The craft slipped off after a few seconds, shipping a little water as she did so; but a lurch on the part of the voyagers righted her. Quick work with pole and paddle and she was again headed downstream.

Frequently they grounded on gravelly bars. On such occasions Redbird lightened ship by stepping out and shoving until the craft floated free. An eddy banged them broadside against a huge log, and the shock hurled Mr. Prescott bodily out of the boat. He landed neatly on the log, and still clinging to his paddle, crawled hastily aboard again.

Bunty was still laughing merrily at his father's astonished look, when the boat drove full tilt into a little island. Redbird, giving all his attention to an ugly rock, had expected that the current would carry them around the island, instead of on top of it. He was taken by surprise and went

overboard with a splash. Buntty dived headlong into the bottom of the boat, but sustained no injury; his father came suddenly to his knees. They were up and off again in an instant, Redbird grinning sheepishly over his mishap.

With the first few minutes, the voyagers had gained confidence in their ability to handle the boat, and from that time on they heartily enjoyed the trip through "White Water." Buntty yelled with delight as each obstruction was met and safely passed, and broad smiles lighted up the faces of his father and the Indian. In fact, the lad voiced the sentiment of all of them when at last the boat glided into quiet water, and he cried: "That was bully! I'm sorry it's over."

They landed on a gently shelving beach to take stock. Their cargo had been wildly tossed about. Some of the eggs were broken, and a loaf or two of bread had had a dash of water. The boat was somewhat sprung from striking the log, but the damage was above the water line, so they had nothing to fear from leaks. Having repacked everything, they set out again.

Many signs proved to them that they were nearing the end of their journey. For two days prior to reaching the "White Water" it had been almost impossible to catch trout. The fierce pickerel, ranging upstream from Lake Huron, had driven

the less bloodthirsty fish back. So they angled for pickerel with minnows and caught many of these stout, active fellows. They were good enough eating, though lacking the delicate flavor of trout.

The stream bore more logs each mile they advanced, until it became difficult to force a passage through it. At noon of the thirteenth day, Redbird steered the boat to a landing place on the right bank. "No go farther," he announced. "Man here take um boat down."

As they stepped ashore, they heard the sound of the long-drawn dinner whistle from the mill at Au Sable. They had come unscathed through the wilderness, and were knocking at the backdoor of frontier civilization.

CHAPTER XXVII

DUTY CALLS MR. PRESCOTT

It was but three miles to the twin villages by road, though ten miles by river. A farmer near their landing place agreed to move the boat to Au Sable, taking in part payment the cooking utensils and the remaining canned provisions. Shouldering guns and rods and blanket rolls, the voyagers, having eaten their last meal by the river, started for town.

Arriving there, they found that a coasting steamer which would take them to Cheboygan, the nearest point convenient to Grayling by railroad, would sail at dusk. Accommodations were secured and their baggage left on board the vessel. The farmer by this time had arrived with the craft which had served them so well on the river, and it was shipped back by rail.

The afternoon was but half gone. There was nothing to do and little to see in the towns. The water attracted the trio, and soon they were strolling along the shore of the lake, watching the blue waves roll ceaselessly in, calling each other's

attention to the occasional tiny whitecaps, and skipping flat stones over the heaving surface.

At the skipping game, Buntz outclassed his father and Redbird. He seemed to find the flattest, thinnest stones, and by bending low throw them so they barely touched the water for a long distance. He held the record with nine "skips" for one stone, while the best the others could do was three or four.

They had supper on board ship. When the little vessel steered bravely out of the harbor there were anxious hearts aboard, for a thick fog had settled down with the coming of night. It was so dense that those on the bridge could see but a few yards in any direction and there was great danger of a collision. So the vessel proceeded only at half-speed, while the hoarse warning of her whistle sounded out over the tumbling lake.

All night long, at thirty-second intervals, the siren would boom its lonesome note: "Hong—hong—hong!" And from near and far—to the right, to the left, dead ahead and in the rear, other vessels would answer "Hong—hong—hong!" Fortunately, there was no collision, though once or twice they were very near to other ships.

The next day brought little improvement, the fog resting as obstinately as ever on the water. It was the morning of the second day before they

crept cautiously past the breakwater and between the long lines of lumber piles, to Cheboygan dock. Mr. Prescott heaved a sigh of relief when they walked down the gangplank, for he realized what danger they had been in. Later they read of no less than six collisions which had occurred on the Great Lakes during the foggy thirty-six hours.

A south bound train was due to leave very soon, and they managed to get to the station in time, snatching a few mouthfuls of breakfast en route. In two hours they were in Grayling.

Almost the first man they met there was Si Fox, who had driven in to buy some supplies. He greeted them heartily and pooh-poohed Mr. Prescott's plan to hire a livery to take them home. "Plenty of room with me," he declared. "Don't think of hirin' hosses. Some tradin' to do now, but we'll start in an hour, and you'll be home by sundown." His prophecy proved good, for it was not yet dark when they turned into the clearing at Englishman's Camp, and announced their appearance by a series of joyful whoops.

Mr. and Mrs. Pugh were very glad to see them. Supper was prepared for all three, Redbird having been persuaded to put off starting house-keeping for himself again until next morning.

The Englishman pinched Buntty's round, tanned cheek, and declared the boy to be ten pounds

heavier than when he went away. He was, indeed, looking splendidly well. His cough had gone completely with the down-river journey. In fact, he was entirely cured of the stubborn illness which had sent him away from Detroit.

After supper, when they were grouped in the Pugh living room, Mr. Prescott opened the two letters which had come for him during his absence, and which had come to the Grayling post office in care of Mr. Pugh. He read them carefully, and then was silent and thoughtful for a considerable time, as though revolving something in his mind.

Finally he said: "Friends, I have learned something which makes it imperative for me to go to camp at Island Lake this summer—that is, if I am to stay in the National Guard service. The colonel writes me that there is a vacancy in our regiment for major, and that I can have the place if I will come. He urges me to do so, for several reasons. One is that we are almost sure to have war with Spain, he declares, over conditions in Cuba."

All listened quietly, Mr. Pugh removing his pipe from his mouth to nod his head several times. From reading the papers which occasionally fell into his hands, the Englishman had long since decided that the Spanish policy on the island would result, sooner or later, in American inter-

vention. This Spain would resent with bloodshed.

"I will read how he urges me to come," continued Mr. Prescott, unfolding the letter: "'I think, my dear Prescott, that now is the best opportunity to secure the advancement which you deserve. I want you to be promoted for your own sake, but I have a selfish reason, also, for wishing it. There is no doubt in my mind that we are to have war. It will probably come within a year; and when we set off for the front I want to be surrounded by officers whom I can depend upon."

"'The rank of major is yours if you care for it. I realize that your son's health is of more importance to you than a promotion; but if you can possibly get to camp, come. The promotion undoubtedly depends upon your being present.'"

Mr. Prescott folded the letter again and returned it to its envelope. "What shall I do?" he asked.

"Go," said Mr. and Mrs. Pugh, in a breath.

"But what about Hugo? I don't want to take him back to Detroit. Camp is also out of the question, for it is very hot down there."

"He could stay here, Prescott," said the Englishman. "Molly and I and Redbird could look after him. It's only for a week or so, isn't it?"

"Ten days. Your offer is a kind one, and I

thank you heartily for it. But it's for Hugo to say. If he doesn't want me to go, I shall not go. What shall it be, old man?"

"Well, daddy," replied the boy, thoughtfully, "I shall miss you, but you must go. It wouldn't be right to keep you away."

"Thank you, son. I feel that it is my duty to go. I owe the state this much, at least, for the training it has given me: To accept the responsibilities which may be offered me, and to accept active service, if such service becomes necessary. So I'll wire Col. Mainwaring to-morrow to expect me at camp."

CHAPTER XXVIII

LOST IN THE WILDERNESS

“My son,” said Mr. Prescott, a few days later, in bidding Bunty good-bye, “I couldn’t go and leave you this way unless I had confidence in you. I am trusting to your own good sense to do the right things while I am gone. Situations may come up—will come up, most likely—which neither of us can foresee. But under all circumstances be careful; don’t get scared; and try not to do anything I wouldn’t want you to do. Will you remember those things?”

Bunty promised to remember, and his father kissed him and went away. Mr. Pugh drove him to Grayling, where it would be necessary to spend the night in order to catch an early train south the next morning. Hugo and Redbird watched him out of the clearing, and waved their hands just before the big trees shut him from view.

The Pughs wanted Bunty to stay in their home during his father’s absence, but he preferred to sleep in the tent, especially as Redbird promised to remain near him. There was the usual camp

fire the first night, and the Indian and Mr. and Mrs. Pugh did their best to keep it from being a lonesome one for Bunty. The Englishman talked more than Bunty had ever heard him talk before, telling wonderful stories of hunting and fishing. Redbird gave some interesting legends which had been handed down by his people from generation to generation. All in all, it was a pleasant evening, and bedtime came before the boy realized it.

Redbird had learned a good deal by observation; so he tucked Bunty into bed much as he had seen the boy's father do. Then he rolled himself in a couple of blankets and lay down by the glowing fire, gruffly refusing to occupy Mr. Prescott's bed. That happened each night Mr. Prescott was away, except one, when it rained. Then Redbird stretched himself on the floor of the "parlor" tent. His muscles were so hardened that he did not mind the unyielding surface at all.

Time passed much as it had before, except that Bunty wrote a letter to his father every day, and received one in reply every day. Either Mr. Pugh or one of the Foxes or some of the fishermen in the camps down the river, brought up the mail and took outgoing letters to the post office.

The boy and the faithful Indian fished for trout, practiced with rifle and revolver, and tramped

through the barrens, the Indian taking pains to impart his wide woods lore to his little friend. Partially through this teaching, Bunty learned to recognize the birds and animals and fishes of Michigan when he saw them. Also he knew something of their haunts and habits. He could name, as well, the trees and plants and grasses. He could tell you that balsam fir branches made the best bed, for he had tried all kinds of camp-fashioned beds. He knew which berries were good for food and which were worthless or poisonous.

He taught himself to walk habitually without noise in the forest, exercising the same care as his Indian mentor. Not a leaf rustled beneath his feet; not a swishing branch betrayed him. His caution in this respect enabled him to see more than falls to the lot of one who walks carelessly or clumsily where wild things are.

Their daily program included some practice in archery. Redbird made several heavy, feathered arrows, each headed with a sharp nail, and set up a target at which to shoot them. Hugo used the bow the Indian had previously given him, and in this sport, too, became quite proficient. Baseball was not neglected, the Foxes coming over frequently to play "rotation."

Hugo had never visited the Fox home, though frequently invited to do so. When the boys cap-

tured a couple of cub bears, however, and urged him to come over and see the little fellows, he decided to do so. Accordingly, after he and Redbird had eaten an early dinner one day, they started for the settler's cabin.

It was a gray, sunless afternoon, with a hint of coming rain. They left the clearing on the trail to Big Sable, but soon branched off, following a narrow road to the right. Fox lived some distance east of Sable. The distance to Fox's from Englishman's Camp was said to be two miles, but distances are elastic in the north country, and in reality it was nearer four.

The river purled along on their right most of the way, though out of sight behind its screen of underbrush. A leisurely walk of an hour and a half brought them to their destination.

Originally Fox had built the common square log cabin of one room, but as his family grew up they needed more room. So lean-tos were built to the rear, or west—the cabin, standing on a slight knoll, faced the east—and on the north as well.

The place was not so neat or comfortable as Pugh's. Yet it showed considerable care and labor, nevertheless. Quite a space back of the house had been cleared of stumps and jack pines and had been planted in corn, potatoes, cabbages,

onions, peas and other vegetables. There were two stacks of marsh hay by the log barn, near which another enclosure had also been fenced for the horses. A few rude farming implements were strewn about the yard. Under the wide eaves of the low roof, fishpoles were hanging on pegs.

The whole Fox family, including Mrs. Fox, a little woman in a faded calico dress, greeted them. They were invited in, but Bunty's northern training had already made him feel that an hour of good weather spent indoors, without reason, was an hour wasted. Besides, there were the cubs, just begging to be played with.

They were active little black fellows, as tall as an ordinary-sized dog, but thicker and heavier. They were fastened by means of long chains, each to his own pole. The poles had been driven firmly into the ground, and a wide iron ring at the end of the chain slipped over the top. The cubs were close enough to play together, but far enough apart so the chains would not become tangled and cause trouble.

Never did cubs have a better time. They played together like kittens, wrestling earnestly as they stood upright on their hind legs, or cuffing one another as they tussled in the sand. The Foxes took a hand in the fun, too, though being careful not to anger the little bears. The animals' claws

were as sharp as steel, and each of the lads bore scratches to prove it.

About five o'clock Bunty and Redbird started homeward, quite unwillingly, too, for the boy felt he could play with the cubs for a week without tiring of them. They had gone some distance down the trail when Fox called Redbird back to give him a message to the Englishman.

Bunty sat down on a stump to await the Indian's return. As was his custom, he remained perfectly quiet. Presently a twig cracked behind him. He turned to look squarely into the inquiring face of a baby deer, scarce ten feet away.

The fawn was a tiny fellow, with beautiful brown eyes, spotted coat, and long, slender legs. He had not yet learned to fear mankind, though doubtless his mother had tried to teach him that these strange, two-legged animals were dangerous. He was curious, but not afraid. He wrinkled his nose daintily, and even advanced a slim foreleg a bit as he sniffed.

Bunty felt an overwhelming desire to make friends with this graceful, wild thing of the barrens and stroke the soft coat and let the velvety nose nuzzle his hand. So he began getting carefully off the stump. He moved very slowly, knowing that sudden motion would probably startle the fawn to flight.

It took considerable time to reach the ground, but at last he did so. Then he inched forward, scarcely daring to breathe, while his hand was outstretched in friendly fashion.

But when he was within two yards of the deer, the little animal felt the stirring of instinct within him, and turning, trotted briskly away. Caution warned him that this quiet creature came of a species which warred upon his people. And yet, he seemed inoffensive and friendly. So the fawn stopped, and looked curiously over his shoulder.

Bunty advanced again, repeating his former tactics of going carefully when within easy distance of the fawn. Again he was permitted to get almost within touch before the fawn trotted off.

A third and a fourth time the fawn played tag with Bunty, who was now utterly engrossed with the game. He forgot Redbird, probably expecting him in the trail behind; he looked neither to the right nor to the left as he followed the fawn up and down hill, around a small swamp and through groves of jack pines. It was a fascinating chase.

After perhaps half an hour of this fruitless pursuit, it was borne in upon him that the fawn did not intend to let him get too near, so he changed his tactics. When the little animal stopped again, the boy advanced slowly, with hand

outstretched, until the fawn had almost made up his mind to trot away again. Then Bunty suddenly dashed forward and attempted to capture it by clasping his arms about its neck.

This was too much. The fawn, now thoroughly frightened, broke away and ran wildly, with Bunty at his heels. For a little while the boy kept up fairly well; but the fawn, young as he was, proved too fast, and gradually drew away. Bunty became aware of a crashing in the bushes at his right, and glanced over to see two full grown deer, a buck and a doe, running along parallel with his course. They had been near all the time, watching his efforts to make friends with the fawn.

He stopped disappointedly on a small rise. The big deer changed their course to join the fawn. The three of them, still running easily, ascended another slope, dodged through a jack pine grove on the top, and disappeared down the other side.

Bunty awoke to his situation with a start. Jack pine plains, utterly strange in appearance, billowed away to the horizon on every hand. There was no sign of a trail, nor of human habitation anywhere. A dead silence followed the vanishing of the deer. Even the birds were gone. In sudden panic he called "Redbird!" with all his might.

Nothing answered but the echoes, though he

called again and again. Neither the Indian nor any other person was within sight or hearing. He sank down on a log and covered his face with his hands. He was lost in the wilderness!

CHAPTER XXIX

BUNTY LEARNS SELF-DEPENDENCE

For a few moments he was more frightened than he had ever been before in all his life. Lost, miles from the nearest house; lost, without food or means of getting it. Such a situation has appalled stouter hearts than that of a boy who had always been sheltered and cared for.

But Bunty felt that it was not the time to give up; he must hurry if he wished to escape from this great, hushed loneliness before night. He sprang to his feet and gazed eagerly about. Soon he felt that he remembered the exact direction in which the Fox cabin lay. The longer he looked, the more certain he felt that it was beyond a certain distant ridge of hills. The ridge seemed higher than the gentle slope he had climbed in pursuit of the fawn; but it was probably the distance which made it look so steep.

So he set out toward the hills. He was quite hopeful at first, and walked steadily, though not very fast. Then, as they seemed to remain a long way off, he hurried his footsteps. Presently he was running breathlessly.

When at last he reached the base of the hills, poor Bunty was sure that he had not crossed them, and that he was more hopelessly lost than ever. For the hundredth time that afternoon he gazed at the sky, in the hope that some slight glimmer from the sun would guide him. But it was hidden behind a gray pall of clouds which gave him no idea at all of its whereabouts. Feeling very friendless and alone the boy sank down on a log and burst into tears.

He cried bitterly for some minutes. The jack pine country, which had seemed so quiet and friendly when he was with his father or Redbird, now teemed with unknown terrors. There were bears and wolves wandering about, he knew; and he could not defend himself from them. He carried no weapons. Even if a wild animal did not attack him, he would be very lonesome, here in the wilderness, far from a human being.

He pictured to himself the consternation of Redbird and the Pughs, and the search which would be undertaken if, indeed, the Indian was not searching for him already. When this thought came he rose to his feet again, looked about, and called Redbird's name with all his might. But only the cruel echoes answered; there was no friendly stir in all the pigmy forest.

But his native courage soon reasserted itself.

He dried his eyes and tried manfully to smile. After all, it meant only a few hours of hunger and cold and weariness. He was sure to be rescued next day. He would ascend the ridge above him to look for landmarks which might guide him to Englishman's Camp. Then he would proceed carefully in what he believed to be the right direction. When darkness came he would halt for the night and build a fire.

With the thought of a fire, he felt for the waterproof packet of matches in the pocket of his shirt. It was safe. He was glad that he had obeyed his father's warning to keep matches always by him. What else was it? . . . Hadn't there been something else mentioned which would help him in trouble like this? They had talked about it, he remembered, by the camp fire one night—hurrah, he knew: *The compass!*

There it was, strapped in its accustomed place on his left wrist, the little needle swinging free. He was saved!

Flushed with joyous excitement, he turned his arm until the red-pointed tip rested directly over the letter "N." The result puzzled him. Why, the needle pointed to the ridge behind him! That was north. All the time, in his panic-stricken flight, he had been running directly away from camp, which was in the south! He had been pene-

trating deeper and deeper into the heart of the wilderness.

Confident now, he reasoned carefully what to do. The Fox cabin was directly north of Englishman's Camp. It would be simple enough to start from Fox's, and disregarding the road, strike back to Pugh's by the compass alone. But in chasing the fawn, he knew that he had gone east or west as well as north. So a course straight south from where he stood might not bring him to the clearing.

That made the boy look blank again. Unless he knew whether he were east or west of Pugh's, he might miss it quite easily. . . . No! The Grayling road ran east and west between the village and the clearing. He believed that he was well acquainted with that, and could distinguish it from the ordinary trails through the brush. Once upon it, even were he three or four miles west of Pugh's, he would be safe. And he *must* be to the west, for the river was on the east of the Englishman's. And there was neither sight nor sound of the river from that point.

All this was not reasoned out as quickly and easily as might be inferred from the description. It took time and much thought. At times, he was far from sure that his reasoning was right. At such moments it was all he could do to keep from

yielding to his fears and loneliness again. But he mastered himself bravely, and set off sturdily to the south.

The journey over the back trail was quite uneventful, though longer than Hugo expected. He had wandered farther than he realized. As the darkness came down, his heart sank, for the scrub, uncrossed by road or path, lengthened out endlessly before him. He halted again and again to examine his compass.

He was tired and footsore. The loose sand made walking slow and painful. He was not hungry, though conscious of a great emptiness within him. The temptation to cry and to call for his father was almost overpowering. But he puckered up his lips, instead, and whistled a pitiful little tune as he stumbled bravely onward.

He pitched over a hidden root and plunged headlong into an open space. Parallel lines of sand gleamed white to the right and left, where wagon wheels had worn away the coarse grass. The Grayling road!

He arose and paused to get his bearings. Yes, the trail had a familiar look. There was that big stump by the roadside to the left. He was sure he had seen it before. He hurried to the eastward, passed the big stump—and found himself at the entrance of the clearing. The lights from Pugh's

house glimmered in friendly fashion through the trees!

“Un-nh-hh!”

Bunty whirled in his tracks at the sound. Behind him in the road stood Redbird!

“Why, Redbird!” he cried happily. “I’m so glad to see you again. I was lost out there. Where have you been?”

The Indian pointed to the north. “Behind you.”

“Behind me? Why, what do you mean?”

“I saw you run after fawn. I run, too. Deer go over um hill. Little White Chief lost. Sit down; get up; run to um hill; cry. Bimeby see what way to go. Redbird follow. Un-nh-hh!”

“Redbird,” began Bunty. His voice quivered. The Indian’s explanation made him feel almost as lonesome as he had felt in the wilderness. His friend had deserted him in the hour of need! “You—you let me wander around out there and wouldn’t help me? I was dreadfully frightened! You really did that, Redbird?” The tears were very near the surface.

The Indian nodded impassively.

“Why?”

The Indian glided forward and laid his brown hand caressingly on Bunty’s shoulder. “Listen: Little White Chief lost. Redbird near, but you

no see him. Little White Chief all alone. Heap scared first. Bimeby think what Big White Chief say to do if he get lost. Little White Chief no cry then; heap brave. Look at um compass; think hard. Go right way all alone. Never get lost again!"

Bunty was thoughtful for a few moments. Redbird's words showed that he had been a true friend—truer than if he had appeared when the boy first realized his trouble. He was teaching in his own crude way that the wilderness is cruel and merciless to the weak, but that the strong and self-reliant may conquer it. Fear makes one weak. And Bunty, by rising above his fear, would not feel it again when alone in the scrub. He had become strong and self-reliant. Leaning on no one, he had beaten the terrors of the barrens.

"Is that why you didn't help me—so I would learn to depend more on myself, Redbird?"

Redbird nodded again. "Yes. I help you now, some day you get lost, Redbird not near, mebbe; Big White Chief not near. Little White Chief die then, all alone. No die now; no get lost again."

Bunty slipped his hand into that of the Indian.

"You are right, Redbird," he said, simply. "I won't be afraid at all, the next time, for I know I can find my way out."

With light hearts they set out towards Pugh's. As they approached, a delicious aroma was wafted to them. Mrs. Pugh was getting supper. "My, that's good!" said the boy. "Aren't you hungry, Redbird? I am!"

CHAPTER XXX

BUNTY LEARNS TO SWIM

The time which Mr. Prescott was away proved very eventful. Before his return, Bunty had another adventure which came near costing his life. Indeed, had it not been for his newly found self-reliance, which enabled him to think coolly and quickly, he could not have saved himself.

Shortly after the visit to the Foxes, "Little Round" Fox and "Red" Fox came over and suggested that they go fishing in Lost Lake. The lake, which has been mentioned before in this story, is a good-sized sheet of water some distance east of the Au Sable in the barrens. There were perch and bass and pickerel in it, the boys declared, almost begging to be caught. Bunty had never seen the lake, and was anxious to go. Redbird agreed to the trip. So the four of them started.

The journey was quite long, so they carried their noonday lunch with them. Redbird borrowed one of Mr. Pugh's boats to ferry them across the Au Sable, tying it to a root on the east shore to await their return.

After an hour's difficult walking they came to a well-defined path. Redbird pronounced it a deer-run, used by deer and other animals on their way to water. There were plenty of signs that it had been recently used, though they saw no living thing except the birds.

The lake proved to be a placid, sparkling sheet of water about one mile wide by two miles long. There was a boat on an inlet in the west shore, for the use of the few fishermen who came there. After lunch they embarked in it, using pieces of pine for paddles. The Fox boys knew the holes where the big fellows lurked, and all were soon fishing patiently. The fish bit ravenously, and after an hour's royal sport the four had all the fish they could carry home.

It was still early. "Roundy" suggested that they go in bathing. The others agreed, with shouts of approval. So the boat was rowed back to the inlet. There they undressed hastily and jumped into the water. It was shallow for a long distance out, and there seemed to be no danger.

But Bunty, though he paddled and splashed as noisily as the rest, could not make himself believe that he was doing right. He felt that his father would not approve of his course. It had been understood between them that he would teach Bunty to swim on his return from Island Lake.

Bunty argued to himself that there was no danger; even a hundred yards from shore the water came scarcely to his waist. Besides, Redbird, who could swim like a seal, was near, and would save him did he get beyond his depth. Yet, despite these arguments, he did not have a good time; his conscience kept troubling him.

The water seemed cold at first. Soon they did not mind it, for the air was delightfully warm. Both "Roundy" and "Red" could swim, and puffed stoutly into deep water. They frequently returned to where Bunty played about, lapped by the little waves.

Gradually he forgot his fears and the pricking of his conscience. He worked out into the lake. The water rose to his shoulders when he was opposite the point of land on the right. There were two of these little peninsulas, and they encircled the inlet like arms.

Redbird hovered near his little friend, swimming, floating, treading water—acting very much, in fact, like a great brown fish.

A sharp yell from "Roundy" attracted their attention. He pointed excitedly toward the shore. Their boat had worked loose, and now, driven by a slight breeze and urged by the current, it was drifting away from them, out of the inlet to the north. The craft was already some distance away

and following a course which widened the gap between itself and the swimmers every moment. The fish and their clothing were aboard it.

Redbird, who at that moment was floating comfortably on his back, turned over and started in pursuit of the runaway. His powerful arms cut the water with the regularity of propeller blades. The Fox boys started, too, but kept close inshore. Bunty was left by himself, standing in the water. It came almost to his chin, and swayed him gently back and forth.

It was to be, evidently, something of a chase. The boat had been seized by a current which swung around the other arm of the inlet and down the shore. Redbird gained but little at first. The Foxes worked hard, sending up a great deal of spray with their heels, though not getting ahead much.

Bunty, facing the shore, turned to watch the procession, which was off to his right. To get a better view he stepped back toward the point. His foot encountered only the steep edge of a sandbank which fell away abruptly.

He sank in twelve feet of water. The current, sweeping around the southern point to enter the inlet, had gouged out a hole in the yielding bottom. The result was a dangerous trap to anyone who could not swim.

The boy was taken so completely by surprise that he could not struggle. Sparks seemed to flash before his eyes as he went down; the water roared in his ears. He gasped for breath, and the inrush of water at mouth and nostrils nearly strangled him then and there. He beat wildly with arms and legs.

He did not quite reach the bottom before ascending again. His struggles helped him upward and at last, after what seemed a long, long time, he shot to the surface, into the sunshine and blessed air. He breathed twice, in great, sobbing breaths, bringing relief to his bursting lungs. Then the waters closed over his head again.

This time he did not remain under so long. The mad thrashing of his limbs brought him up within a few seconds. But already he was very tired. His muscles ached from the violent strain put upon them. His endurance was fast going.

Had the boy remained panic-stricken he would surely have drowned. But the first surprise over, a measure of coolness returned. The thought of his escape from the barrens flashed into his mind and encouraged him. He had remembered, even while the water gurgled in his ears, a talk about swimming which he had had with his father.

"Bunty," his father had said, as they sat by the camp fire one evening, "if you can remember

a few simple rules, you will learn to swim quite easily. First, put your hands together under your chin, thumbs touching, elbows pointing outward just below the surface. Move your hands outward and downward, backs inward, the fingers of each hand extended and joined. The first push will keep your head above water. When both arms are fully extended, sweep them back until they touch your legs. Then bring them back to your chin for another stroke. ‘

“As for your legs, use them just like a frog. A frog swims as though he were kicking something, both legs wide apart. Don’t draw your knees under you; he doesn’t. Kick only when your hands are extended for the stroke. And don’t hurry; make both the kick and the stroke slowly. That’s all. It’s one of the easiest things in the world to learn to swim.”

He seemed to hear his father’s voice, encouraging him to struggle on, and new strength came to him. When he reached the surface again, he was ready to put the directions into play. Up came the hands under his chin. He made the wide sweep with extended arms, and kicked out vigorously with his feet. But fear was upon him, and the moves were made too hastily. He had moved but a few inches toward the shore when his head went under again.

The immersion did not worry him as much as the strain upon his limbs. He had regained control of his breathing somewhat, and could get air more regularly. But his muscles seemed incapable of another movement.

Back on the surface, he went through the frog-like movements very languidly. His arms could scarcely obey the directions of his brain. His lungs seemed knotting with pain, and his heart pounded heavily.

But to his joy he found that he was able to keep afloat a little longer. His very weakness was now in his favor; it kept him from making the strokes too rapidly. One stroke—two—three. He was gaining a little; Was he really nearer shore, though? Four—five—

Arms and legs gave out utterly. He sank, but only to his shoulders; his feet had touched the bottom!

Sobbing with weakness and relief, he struggled to shore and threw himself on the warm sand. There he lay, scarce able to move, until Redbird and the Foxes returned with the captured boat.

Buntz could not have been more than eight feet from safety at any time, yet it had been a life and death struggle to fight his way out of the hole. Afterwards he found that he had learned perfectly how to swim.

CHAPTER XXXI

MR. PRESCOTT STARTS A SCHOOL

A few days later Mr. Prescott returned and was warmly welcomed by the little settlement in and about Englishman's Camp. He had a gift for each of them: A meerschaum pipe for Pugh; a little gold pin for Mrs. Pugh; a punching bag for Bunty; a new hunting-knife for Redbird; and something for every one of the Fox family. One of their gifts was a set of boxing gloves, and these became instantly popular. In fact, not a day passed thereafter but the gloves were in use, the boys nearest a size pummeling each other good-naturedly.

"Red" Fox had an ear for music. He had been much taken with *Reveille* which Bunty had taught him, and his clear, melodious whistle made the barrens ring with it. For him Mr. Prescott had bought a bugle, a present which the boy received with the keenest delight. It was quite easy to teach him to read music. Soon, from a drill book which was lent him, he had mastered all the military calls. He was, Mr. Prescott

declared, more than half a soldier, and a good deal of a musician as well.

Father and son had a long talk. Bunty manfully confessed his disobedience in bathing in Lost Lake, and the struggle for life which it had cost him. The consequences of the act, Mr. Prescott felt, had proved punishment enough. So Bunty did not receive the scolding which he believed he deserved. He and Redbird together told of the former's being lost in the barrens. The Indian's course in letting Bunty find his way out was entirely approved by Mr. Prescott.

One crisp morning, when the hint of coming frost was in the air, Mr. Prescott, his eyes twinkling, asked: "Don't you hear something out of the ordinary, old man?"

The boy bent his head and listened long and intently. "Why, no," he said, puzzled. "I don't believe I hear a thing, daddy. What does it sound like?"

"Bells."

"Bells?" echoed Bunty, wonderingly. "I didn't know there was a bell nearer than Grayling."

"There isn't. But bells are echoing all over the country to-day."

"Why are they, daddy?"

"It's the first Monday in September."

“O-o-oh!” said Bunty, opening his eyes. “It’s the first day of school.”

“Yes,” replied his father, nodding briskly, “and the district school at Englishman’s Camp is about to open. Ding-dong, ding-dong!”

Gravely father and son marched in and took seats under the fly. With equal gravity Redbird joined them. “Injun go um school, too,” he announced. “Un-nh-hh!”

As is the custom of most schools, the scholars were duly enrolled and then dismissed for the day. The next morning, however, the sessions began in earnest. Bunty took up the same work which his friends were doing in the Forest Avenue school, back in Detroit. Redbird began patiently at the bottom, for he had never learned to read and write.

But he was in earnest, and applied himself well. The alphabet, the copy book and the multiplication table were more a mystery to him than the most obscure trail in the forest.

Sessions were held only in the forenoons. After dinner, master and pupils toiled until dark, getting ready for winter. From logs chosen carefully from the great pile, the addition to the cabin was built. Redbird’s skill helped much in this work. Mr. Pugh lent a hand in getting the timbers up onto the wall, after they had been trimmed,

and notched at each end to fit snugly. Bunty chinked both the addition and the main cabin with mortar so the frost could not penetrate.

Lumber was brought from Grayling, and with it floors were relaid and the roof repaired. It also furnished the material for new, tight-fitting doors. The logs remaining after the addition was finished were cut in proper lengths for the fireplace and the stove. On this task Mr. Prescott and Redbird took turns at the crosscut saw. * A lean-to shed in which to store the wood was added to the rear of the cabin. Under the same shelter a well was driven, an iron pump bringing up plenty of good water.

Mr. Prescott and Bunty still clung to their tent-home, though the frosts had come by this time. They awoke mornings to see a world of sparkling white spread out before them. The trees and shrubs took on the beautiful hues of autumn, and a thin scum of ice formed now and then on quiet pools along the Au Sable.

They noted these changes with regret. Walls and a roof would seem almost stifling after the happy months spent practically in the open. They resolved to postpone as long as possible the day when they must move into the cabin.

Redbird decided to stay in Pugh's barn all winter, though they urged him to share the cabin with

them. The Englishman lent him a stove and Mr. Prescott helped build him a chimney, with the result that his quarters were fully as comfortable as their own promised to be. His evenings he still spent with father and son, tending the big camp fire, which became increasingly necessary as the season waned.

Mr. Prescott saw that it would be best, because of bad weather, to prepare at least part of their own meals during the winter. With his customary thoroughness he prepared to do so. He sent for a cookbook, and laid in ample supplies of food of all kinds. In fact, no detail necessary for comfort in the wilderness was forgotten. They were thoroughly fortified for the long siege of cold weather.

School had been in session for about a week when Si Fox came over one evening to call upon them. They talked of various things. It was easy to see that Fox had a reason for being there. Yet it was some time before he got around, bashfully, to state the object of his visit. But it came out at last: He had heard of the school.

“If ye don’t mind, Mr. Prescott,” he said, hesitatingly, “I’d like my boys to get some schoolin’. They’re good lads, and smart enough; but there’s no chance out here to learn anything besides huntin’ and fishin’. They may not want to stay in the backwoods always. And when they do go out

into the world, I don't want 'em to say their father kept 'em from gettin' educated. If you could take 'em in, Mr. Prescott, I'd be willin' to pay——"

"Indeed, Fox, I shall be glad to have them come," replied Mr. Prescott, warmly; "and not for pay, either. This is a common school, and all are welcome—providing they come to learn. I have some theories of my own on teaching which I want to try out. So I will be helping myself as well as, I hope, helping them. By all means send them along."

"But what about books?" inquired Fox anxiously.

"I don't know what books they'll need," replied Mr. Prescott. "Part of my experiment will be to find out. Leave that to me; I can get them at wholesale, and the cost to you will not be very great, I assure you. And some of them I have and will be only too glad to let them use."

Fox rose to go, but lingered awkwardly for a few moments. "There's something else, Mr. Prescott," he said, finally. "I'd like to come myself. I never had any schoolin'. I can cipher a little, though, and I'd like to learn to read and write. Could you put up with me? I'll try to be as little bother as possible."

"Of course, and be glad of the chance to do so. Do come!"

So it was settled. The next morning the Fox family came into the clearing, Indian file. The "Au Sable District School" had increased its membership to seven; its pupils were between the ages of eight and fifty, and they represented two races.

CHAPTER XXXII

WORK AND PLAY AT THE SCHOOL

Though the nights were cool, the days remained pleasant and quite warm, so sessions of the school were still held in the tents. Rough pine desks were made for each pupil, and slates, pencils, tablets, copy and spelling books were secured at Grayling. The novelty wore off very soon. It did not seem strange to any of them that a father, his four sons, and an Indian should be studying away, side by side in a school built of canvas.

As Mr. Prescott had said, he had ideas of his own as to how a school should be run, and he proceeded to put them into practice. The sessions lasted from eight o'clock until twelve, with a half hour's recess at ten o'clock. A pupil could leave his seat whenever he wished and could whisper with the others, as long as his lessons were recited well. But when he fell behind, privileges were withdrawn until he made up his work.

The recesses were times of merry sport. Baseball was not neglected, but there were other means of exercise and fun as well. Parallel bars were

built, and a trapeze hung near by in a stout frame. The punching bag was rigged up on another frame and frequently resounded to the whacking of two pairs of busy fists. The boxing gloves simply had to be kept at the school, since the two smallest Foxes never could agree which was the more skillful with them. It was necessary to try conclusions every day.

Baseball games were played on two successive Saturdays. The first time the opponents were a Grayling nine. The pitching of the Englishman was too much for them, and the Au Sable team won, 12 to 4. The second game was with a team of settlers, many of whom came long distances to play. It was close, but the Au Sable team was again the victor, Mr. Prescott winning it by a mighty home run swat into the river in the ninth inning.

As the weather got cooler, a football replaced the baseball. Recess was given over to drop kicks and place kicks and punts, with all of which, of course, Mr. Prescott was very familiar. Pugh, who generally managed to be about at recess time, proved a great punter. This was easily explained: He had played "Rugby" in England.

After the Foxes had been in attendance at the school for a fortnight, Mr. Prescott put another of his ideas into practice. All the pupils except

Bunty had started with reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, and had made good progress. They were anxious to learn, and applied themselves earnestly.

"I have been watching you," announced the teacher, "and I believe I understand each of you. The lessons are beginning to be easy now. You need something else to occupy your time. In most schools you would be given longer lessons. In this you will be given something you like to do.

"First, there's Mr. Fox. He has been a hunter and trapper all his life—not because he wanted to be, particularly, but because he was so placed that hunting and fishing and trapping were the only things to do. Really, nature intended him for something else. He dreams of being a farmer some day."

Fox pounded the desk with his fist. "That's right, Mr. Prescott!" he cried excitedly. "I'd give anything to farm it!"

Mr. Prescott smiled and nodded. "Very well; you shall. You have the groundwork of an education. Keep practicing your reading, writing and spelling, and in a year you will do as well with them as most men.

"Now for the rest of it; I have ordered a number of books on farming for you, selecting those dealing with northern latitudes and sandy soil.

Besides, your name has been placed on the list of the Department of Agriculture at Washington, and you will get all their bulletins. These deal with renewing the land, growing new crops, reforestation—in fact, everything an up-to-date farmer should know. How does that suit you?”

“Suit me?” cried the settler. “Why, Mr. Prescott, a fortune couldn’t suit me any better. Thank you a thousand times!”

“That’s all right; don’t thank me. Bunty and I will come up here next year and eat all your strawberries and melons. Redbird, you’re next. I find that you are a good deal of a builder. Without your help I couldn’t have made that addition to the cabin stand up. Would you like to learn how they put up great structures of brick and steel and stone in the cities?”

“Un-nh-hh!” He would. They could see the desire in his eager nod and sparkling eyes.

“Well, I have a brother who is an architect and builder. I have written him to send some books of plans and illustrations for you. They will be here presently. They will teach you how to figure and how to draw a straight line.

“Now, Herbert.” Everybody, including the young man himself, looked startled to hear “Red” Fox called by his real name. “You were meant either for a musician or a soldier; maybe both.

Already you can make that trumpet talk. If there's war with Spain—but we'll let the future take care of itself.

“I know you would like to learn the history of music and of some of the great composers. I have looked after that. What instrument would you like to play?”

“He's always wanted a fiddle,” put in Mr. Fox; “but we never felt as if we could afford it.”

“Well, I call that lucky!” cried Mr. Prescott. “When I was a boy, my father bought me a fiddle. It's as good as new, because I never could learn to play, and soon gave up trying. I'll send home for that. And I might be able to help you a little at first, Herbert, for I had a good teacher.” “Red” looked his thankfulness; he was almost too happy to speak.

“Henry.” It was now “Blackie's” turn to be surprised at the mention of his “really-truly” name. “Henry, you seem to be a good deal of a naturalist. You know more about bugs and fish and beetles than any of us. Well, you should have a microscope and a couple of good works to go by. We can rig up a butterfly net and some arrangement for keeping specimens, between us.” Poor “Blackie” could only stammer. Here Mr. Prescott thought his searching for queer insects and animals was all right, while his brothers had

always plagued him about it! It seemed too good to be true.

“Joseph, you seem to be the artist of the school. Your drawing shows decided talent. That picture of your father the other day—” “Silver” blushed, and Mr. Fox looked suspicious—“was really good. I have sent for some water colors and drawing paper for you.

“Richard, you seem to have a passion for machinery, so——”

The other Foxes laughed and the father interrupted: “That’s right, Mr. Prescott, that’s right! He’s taken the clock apart twice!” “Roundy” looked sheepish, but brightened up when the teacher went on: “So we’re going to get you a little steam engine from one of the stores down in Detroit.

“As for you, Bunty, you would like to write a book some day.”

“Why, daddy,” cried the boy in surprise, “how did you know? I never said a word to anybody. But I would, really I would!”

“Blackie” could contain himself no longer. “What’s the matter with Mr. Prescott?” he inquired, in a loud, shrill treble.

“He’s all right!” yelled the school, in unison, excepting Redbird. Not knowing just the proper answer, he added a war whoop to the tumult.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE COMING OF WINTER

Early in October it was found necessary to move the school into the cabin. There was a frost every night, and the days had become quite cold. Mr. Prescott and Bunty and Redbird also spent their evenings in the house, though father and son still clung to the tents as a sleeping place.

The box of books and other articles had arrived, to everyone's great delight. It was a happy and noisy school thereafter. The regular lessons occupied the pupils until recess; afterwards, until noon, each took up his hobby.

Fox read from the farm books, following the words with his forefinger and spelling the long ones out slowly. The dictionary was at his elbow, and he thumbed it frequently. Redbird, lying flat on the floor, seemed never to tire of gazing at pictures of great office buildings. He handled a pencil very well, and soon began drawing plans which he proudly submitted to Mr. Prescott.

"Red" practiced away on his violin without disturbing anyone in the slightest. "Blackie,"

elbows on desk and head on hands, stared into his microscope at some strange insect or grub captured that morning on his way to school. Frequently he called the teacher to share some new discovery. "Silver," a sly smile on his face, never tired of drawing the others. His nimble pencil would not be serious; there was something funny in every effort which he made.

"Roundy," lips pursed importantly, tinkered away at his engine. He made pulleys out of spools, and belts from strips of rawhide until one corner of the room was a whirring, clacking mass of machinery. Bunty and "Silver" tried to run his "mill," as he called it, when the youngster's back was turned, but they did not have his knack. The engine stopped, or a belt broke, or the pulleys would not turn. Yet in five minutes the wrathful "Roundy" would have everything going as well as ever.

Bunty was given a subject on which to write an essay each morning, and when it was done his father read it over and pointed out the mistakes. "Be sure to get the right word in the right place, old man," Mr. Prescott would say. And Bunty, biting on his pencil, would sit for minutes at a time, staring off into vacancy. Like many another writer, he knew what he wanted to say, but not always just how to say it.

There was a great deal to do, yet Mr. Prescott would not let anything keep them inside in the afternoons. When school had been dismissed and dinner eaten, he and Bunty and the Indian would start out. Each carried a shotgun or a rifle, and it was rarely that they came back empty-handed, for squirrels and birds and rabbits were plentiful.

Mr. Prescott had been elected a major at the Island Lake camp, as his colonel had promised; so in the evenings there were drill books to study. Convinced that there would soon be war with Spain over Cuba, and that he would see service in the island, he took up the task of learning the Spanish language. Also, he and Bunty read bits from the great authors. Lastly, an hour of each Friday was set apart for American history, and he had to prepare talks on the landing of the Pilgrims, the "Boston tea party," and similar great events, for his eager scholars.

Time flew so swiftly with these pleasant occupations that the month was gone before they knew it. On November first a letter came from Dr. McFarland, announcing that he and Judge Bancroft and Mr. Conway would reach Englishman's Camp on the seventh. The deer-hunting season opened on the eighth, and they wanted to be on hand.

That night proved to be the last they slept in

tents. The sky was clear when they went to bed, and the tent-walls were left rolled high. But in the morning a six-inch mantle of snow covered the ground, while several small drifts powdered their blankets.

So the work of moving to the cabin was completed. The tents were dried, folded, and packed away, not without a great deal of regret. The Foxes burst into the clearing, yelling like Indians and snowballing each other vigorously. Winter had come.

CHAPTER XXXIV

BUNTY BECOMES A DEER HUNTER

The cookstove had been moved into the addition, leaving the main part of the cabin for a sleeping and living room. There were several roomy bunks in it, built against the wall, and Mr. Prescott and Bunty chose two of them for their own. All the bunks were filled with branches of the fragrant balsam fir, so that the hunters might rest easily after the long day's tramp after deer.

Mr. Prescott knew what was expected of him: That he should have a warm supper awaiting the hunters when they arrived from Detroit. So he set about learning how to make good pancakes. It took several trials and much help from the cook book and Mrs. Pugh. But at last he could prepare light, flaky "flapjacks" which fairly melted in one's mouth.

The snow had made good sleighing, so when the morning of the seventh came, Pugh harnessed his team to a pair of light "bobs" and drove off to Grayling to meet the doctor and his friends.

Bunty watched eagerly all the afternoon for

their coming. At last, just at dusk, there was a jingle of sleighbells, and the sleighs swung briskly into the clearing and up to the cabin. Mr. Prescott threw the door wide open with a cheerful hail.

The ride had been a cold one, and it was an attractive sight which greeted the travelers—the cozy room, bathed in ruddy light from the great, crackling logs in the fireplace, the rough walls covered with racks of guns and fishing rods. The bunks, heaping with balsam, invited them to rest. Beyond the living room, through another open door, was the brightly lighted kitchen. The stove, covered with sizzling pots and pans, from which came tempting odors, stood in the center of it.

It was little wonder that the newcomers lost some of their dignity at the sights and smells, and talked all at once, like a pack of happy boys: “Well, Prescott, you did it, bless you!” cried Dr. McFarland. “A warm supper—coffee and flap-jacks, and I’ve brought some maple syrup;” he paused a moment to sniff, and then continued: “And fried potatoes—and bacon—and eggs. Hooray!”

“See the addition the man has built to our house!” said Judge Bancroft, a tall, handsome man with white hair. “A new floor in the old shack, and new doors, too! Why, the place is a palace to what it used to be!”

“The Au Sable River Hunting Association will please come to order!” shouted Mr. Conway, who was short and fat and jolly. “I move we make Prescott a member of this association because of the good work he has done. All in favor say ‘Aye.’” The three shouted “Aye” as if they were giving a college yell.

They had been slapping Mr. Prescott on the back and shaking hands with him, but now he managed to escape to the kitchen. He felt that the supper needed his attention. Dr. McFarland, turning around, caught sight of Buntz, who was setting the table. The good doctor could only stare at the boy in amazement.

Five months before, in Detroit, Buntz Prescott had been a narrow-chested, listless little fellow with eyes glassy with illness. His thin cheeks had been white, except for an unhealthy red spot on the cheek bones. His body had been thin and stooped.

It was a far different Buntz Prescott who smiled at him now. This boy’s round, plump face was tanned by wind and sun; his eyes sparkled with vigorous health. The thin body had straightened and thickened, until it was as sturdy as a young sapling. A glance at Buntz would convince one that merely being alive was a joy to him.

“I can’t believe it!” cried the doctor at last.

"You rascal, you don't look like the same boy! Come here, sir," and he gave Bunty a hug which nearly squeezed the breath out of him. "Now shake hands with the judge and Mr. Conway."

"Well," remarked Mr. Conway, when this ceremony had been completed, "he's a likely-looking candidate, boys. I move we examine him for membership in our association."

"Fire away!" rejoined the judge and the doctor in unison.

"Very well." He looked sternly at Bunty. "Now, young man, I am about to ask you some important questions, to which you must make prompt and correct answers if you wish to join us. Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"What weapons can you use?"

"Rifle and revolver and shotgun, sir."

"Are you a good shot?"

"I—I think so, sir."

"What have you hunted?"

"Rabbits and partridges and squirrels."

"Hum. Ever get any?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Lots of them!"

"Have you ever fished?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you caught?"

“Rainbow and speckled trout, pickerel and perch and bass.”

“How do you start a fire in the open?”

“Get dry sticks, stand them up on end——”

“That’s enough. Have you ever been lost in the woods?”

“Yes, sir; once.”

“Who rescued you?”

“No one. I found my way to camp with this compass.” He showed them the instrument strapped to his wrist.

“Good. Should a gun be loaded or unloaded in the house?”

“Always unloaded, sir.”

“If you were hunting, and saw something in the brush that looked like a deer, would you fire?”

“Not until I was *sure* it was a deer, sir.”

“Good, again! Have you ever hunted deer?”

“No, sir.”

At this Mr. Conway shook his head dolefully and looked at his two friends. “Too bad, too bad,” he murmured. “I don’t know——”

“A chap has to start some time, hasn’t he?” queried the grinning judge. “You were older than Buntz, I’ll wager, before you killed *your* first deer.”

Mr. Conway nodded. “That’s so,” he agreed.

Then to Bunty: "Supposing I pointed a gun at you?"

"I'd try my best to make you stop."

"Would you like to go out hunting with us?"

"Yes, sir, indeed I would!"

"One more question: What gun is the most dangerous?"

"The unloaded one, sir!" cried Bunty, promptly, and they all laughed.

"Gentlemen of the association," said Mr. Conway, with great formality, "the candidate has passed a very satisfactory examination. I move that he be admitted to membership as a deer hunter. All in favor say 'Aye.' "

"Aye!" roared the three of them.

Mr. Prescott, standing in the door of the kitchen, listened smilingly to the dialogue. "Prescott," said Mr. Conway severely, "if you don't vote I shall be compelled to fine you four flapjacks, payable to me!"

"Aye!" shouted Mr. Prescott.

CHAPTER XXXV

BUNTY LEARNS WHAT "BUCK FEVER" IS

Pugh came over after supper, and the next day's hunting was mapped out. The Englishman had been roaming for days over the territory within ten miles of his home; and he knew where the deer were located.

"East of the river," he said, "between it and Lost Lake, is a bunch of sixteen or eighteen deer. Beyond the lake, over near the big swamp, is another bunch of twenty-five or thirty. Now, you all know that when you begin shooting up a bunch of deer, they run away at the time, but always work back again. I think we'd better start in to-morrow on those between the river and the lake."

"Which way shall we drive?" asked the judge.

"Depends on the wind," replied Pugh. "It was from the north to-day, and I guess it'll hold steady to-morrow."

"Aren't you afraid some other party will kill off those deer beyond the lake before we get to them?" queried Mr. Conway.

“There’s always a chance of it,” was Pugh’s reply; “but I don’t think it probable. Very few hunters will come in anywhere near this far. Fox and the other settlers will hunt west of the river and in toward Grayling. Everything east of the river is ours.”

Buntty was an eager listener to this and other conversation which followed. They went to bed early, but it seemed hours to the boy before he got to sleep. Visions of the morrow’s hunting kept him awake, staring wide-eyed into the darkness.

When slumber did come, it seemed that he had barely closed his eyes before he was awakened by his father’s cheery call: “Al-l o-o-out!” The cabin was warmed and lighted by a famous blaze in the fireplace, and a tempting smell of breakfast coffee was coming from the kitchen. It was barely four o’clock and still very dark outside.

The others awoke and began dressing with much good-natured grumbling. “Heavy clothes, everybody!” commanded Mr. Prescott. “It’s cold, I tell you!”

Breakfast was over in half an hour. They were getting up from the table when Pugh and Redbird entered, each muffled in a Mackinaw and carrying a rifle. There was much cheery bustle, the slipping of bread-and-bacon sandwiches into deep

pockets of Mackinaw or hunting coat, the strapping of cartridge belts and the tying on of ear-lapped caps.

The stars were still gleaming brightly overhead as they stepped out onto the crisp snow, which squeaked beneath their feet. There was a light, cold wind from the north. The air was fresh and bittersweet.

In single file they marched upstream and crossed the river above Pugh's on the ice. On the other shore they halted and the Englishman said: "Redbird and I and one of you will go downstream from here for a mile or so, to start the drive. The others will turn straight in from here, to within a half mile of the lake. You know the place, Doctor—that little valley where the two runs join."

"I'll go with you and Redbird, Pugh," said Judge Bancroft, promptly. "All aboard!"

With a few parting directions from Pugh they separated, he and the judge and the Indian setting off briskly northward, or down the river, while the doctor, Mr. Conway, Mr. Prescott and Buntz struck off through the scrub toward the east. There was a lightening in the sky ahead of them, and as they pressed steadily on the darkness grew less intense. Gradually it turned to filmy gray, and the stars went out, one by one. Buntz thought he had never seen the sky so blue.

“What are they going to do?” he asked his father.

“Who? Pugh and the others? They are going to make the drive. When they get downstream far enough, they will turn to the east, too, and go in about as far as we do. Then the three of them will spread out, like the sticks of a fan, and walk slowly south toward us.

“The wind is from the north. Deer are very keen of scent, and they will smell our friends while they are still a long way off. The deer will retreat toward us, following their usual paths or runways. We will be waiting for them along the main runways, and so should have good sport.”

“And don’t get buck fever when you see one coming, Bunty,” warned the doctor.

“What is buck fever, Doctor?” asked the boy.

“Well,” he laughed in reply, “I don’t know as I can describe it so you’d understand. But if you ever happen to catch it, you’ll know. It’s fright and nervousness and anxiety all mixed up, and it comes when you see big game—sometimes. Thank goodness, a man doesn’t always catch it, or he’d do precious little shooting, eh, Conway?”

“True enough, Doctor,” agreed Conway.

It was daylight when they reached their posts. All about were deer tracks, criss-crossing in every direction over the snow, besides paths more or less

well marked. Some of these paths had not been traveled over a dozen times; others were sunk through the snow, and for several inches into the earth. These were old runways that game had followed for years.

Bunty was stationed at the foot of a high hill, in a clump of small trees which hid him completely. He faced to the north. A few yards in front of him two well-trodden runs joined. One came from the west around the hill, and the other from the east. After they met, the single run disappeared into some scrub about fifty yards to the north.

Mr. Prescott was placed a short distance to the east by Dr. McFarland, but out of sight of Bunty. Mr. Conway took his station beyond a slight rise to the west. This would permit any of the three to fire rapidly at any deer he saw, without having to worry about hitting his friends. Dr. McFarland took his position on another north-and-south runway, a quarter of a mile nearer the lake.

Bunty's position was the best of the four. Some of the deer running from the scent of the men behind would be sure to charge down the little valley toward him. They would be in his sight before being seen by the others, and so he would have the first shot. Those which he missed would

probably turn to the right or left, thus giving them an opportunity.

“Don’t leave your runway,” cautioned his father before leaving the boy alone. “Watch all the time; deer usually come when a chap doesn’t expect them, and so isn’t ready. Don’t make any noise. They have keen ears, and once they hear you, it’s all off. I’ll be over at noon to eat lunch with you.”

So Bunty, promising to remember these directions, took up his lonesome vigil. It was rather pleasant at first. He kept his eyes glued on the runway and on the ridges of hills which flanked the valley. But nothing appeared.

The sun had turned the snow-crust into millions of tiny diamonds. Continued staring made him squint after awhile. Then things began to lag. He grew tired of watching for something which never came. It was cold, too, and he began walking back and forth, like a sentry on his post. His legs grew weary before he was warm, and a log back in the bush attracted him. He brushed the snow off it and sat down, only to find that the runway was now quite out of sight.

Still, he sat there until the report of a rifle, coming faintly from the north, excited his attention. He ran back to his lookout again as another report came echoing over the hills. He searched



Bunty looked up to see a deer standing quietly in the runway before him, so close that it seemed to be staring right into his eyes.

the wilderness of white and dull green with eager eyes. But there was nothing in sight. However, the reports showed that some one had scared up deer and he decided not to go back to his seat. Instead, he squatted down in the snow, with his back to a stump.

The sun was now high, and Bunty began to feel hungry and thirsty. This deer hunting wasn't such fun, after all. He had half a mind to run over for a few minutes to where his father was. A drink of water might help him to pass the time more comfortably. His father had a canteen, he knew.

Bunty was thinking earnestly of that drink of water and nothing at all of hunting. In fact, deer were a thousand miles from his thoughts—when he looked up to see one standing quietly in the runway before him. The animal was so close that it seemed to be staring right into his eyes!

So completely was the young hunter taken aback that he never knew whether it was a buck or a doe that confronted him. He only knew that it seemed big and very threatening, and that he was a small boy, a good deal frightened.

He could feel the sweat burst out on his body. A violent fit of trembling seized him, and his teeth chattered. He tried to shout at the animal and frighten it away, but his voice stuck in his

throat. He never thought to shoot, and if he had, his shaking hands would not have carried the gun to his shoulder. He could only sit and stare back at this big creature, and hope that it would go away and leave him alone.

It is quite probable that the encounter did not last more than a few seconds, and that the sound of his chattering teeth frightened the deer. At any rate, it turned suddenly and bounded away.

That broke the spell. Bunty came to himself with a start. He scrambled to his feet and screamed: "Daddy, daddy, a deer, a deer!" at the top of his voice. Mr. Prescott came running, but failed to get a shot, as the animal had turned back on its own tracks again.

Bunty was wiping the sweat off his forehead when his father joined him. "Now I know, daddy," he said with a long breath, "what 'buck fever' means!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

BUNTY BRINGS DOWN A DEER

The afternoon was more lively. There were frequent rifle reports, some near, some far. Dr. McFarland wounded a deer which fled westward and was brought down by Mr. Prescott. Pugh killed one in the drive and so did the judge. Bounty took a long shot at a big fellow who appeared on the hills to the north, but missed.

About four o'clock, as it was beginning to get dusk, Pugh crossed the river, hitched up his team, and returned with the sleigh. The three carcasses were loaded into it, and taken back to camp. There, to keep prowling animals from getting at them, they were strung up by the heads to the trapeze frame, some distance off the ground.

"In most hunting pictures," ventured Bounty, as he surveyed the prizes, "the deer hang head down."

"Which shows that the artists knew more about painting than they do about hunting," replied the doctor, smiling. "The fur on a deer points back, as it does on a cat. So when you hang him up by

the head, the hide sheds rain. The other way up, the rain gets under the fur. In time, it would spoil the fur, as well as make the flesh soggy.”

Everybody was tired and they went to bed early, after a fine supper in which venison steak played a large part. Bunty did not like the deer meat very much at first; it had a strange, wild flavor. Soon, though, it tasted as good as bacon.

The other days of the hunt were much like the first one had been, except that each member of the party took turns in preparing the meals. Also, those who made the drives were changed daily. This divided the work and pleasure equally. They all felt sore and tired at first from the long tramps, but the lameness wore off presently, and every moment of the hunt became enjoyable.

Mr. Prescott's school was more or less neglected, since all the Foxes, as well as Mr. Prescott and Bunty and Redbird, were hunting daily. However, the settler and his boys came over evenings to have new lessons assigned. These were studied and recited to each other at home. The settlers did not hunt entirely or even mainly for pleasure, as “jerked,” or cured, venison formed the principal part of their food supply during the winter.

Four days had elapsed before Bunty got his first deer. He had had a number of chances, but in each case he fired too hurriedly and missed.

The fifth morning found him on a runway opposite a dense thicket, and he had been standing guard barely an hour when his chance came. The brush prevented him from being taken unawares. There was much crashing of branches before the animal, evidently badly frightened by the drivers in the rear, burst into view.

From hunting views he had seen, he supposed that deer ran through the woods with their heads up and back. But that was another case where the artists were wrong. This deer, a noble buck, held his head low to the ground. His nose was thrust straight ahead, and his wide horns rested back against his sloping neck.

The boy was ready. He had torn off his mittens and cocked his rifle. As the bushes parted and the splendid animal, seeing him, turned to run away at right angles, he brought the gun to his shoulder.

There was no trace of "buck fever" now. He stood firmly, feet wide apart. He glanced as coolly along the sights as though firing at a mark. Seeking a point just back of the deer's foreshoulder, he covered it quickly but carefully . . . and pressed the trigger.

With the crack of the rifle, the buck gave a tremendous leap. He seemed almost to fly. Two or three more great leaps; then he pitched for-

ward, half burying his head in the snow. A few convulsive kicks, and he was dead. The bullet had passed through his heart.

It was the finest "kill" of the season, and the others praised Bunty heartily for his marksmanship. But the boy looked down at the beautiful, glazing eyes of the forest monarch, and the same pang went through him as had on that other day when he caught his first trout. What a pity to kill the great, free, handsome fellow!

There was no hunting on Sundays nor on the days when the weather was bad. On those occasions the others lounged about the cabin and taught Bunty much of their woods lore. He learned that the dog-like barks which sometimes echoed through the wilderness at nightfall came from the throats of the shaggy timber wolves, out on deer hunts of their own. Then certain harsh, snarling screeches were made by wildcats—"bobcats," the settlers called them.

Once as he lay in his bunk and the wind dashed volleys of freezing rain against the windows, he heard the wailing, heart-broken cry of a child, out in the great darkness. It seemed to come from the river. Breathlessly he called the others. Judge Bancroft told him kindly that it was the cry of the bloodthirsty lynx, so human-sounding that it often deceived experienced woodsmen.

Often thereafter he heard the animal give tongue, but the weird cry always startled him.

When the camp-talk was not of hunting, it was usually of affairs in Cuba. Daily papers reached them more or less regularly, and their columns teemed with stories of cruelties to the Cubans. All agreed that sooner or later the United States must interfere and fight Spain. As his elders talked, Bunty sat still and listened. But he made one mighty resolve: If his father went to Cuba, he was going too!

CHAPTER XXXVII

BUNTY FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE

The hunting season drew to a close. The law permitted each hunter to kill five deer, and as the last days of November approached, the quotas were well filled. Pugh had slain his five, so he headed the drive every day. The others lacked but one, or two at the most, of the limit.

The hunting ground had been shifted to the swamp beyond Lost Lake. The deer, from constant pursuit, had grown very wary, and whole days passed without a shot being fired.

Thanksgiving was duly celebrated with a dinner at Pugh's. Game birds and venison and mince pie had been cooked as only Mrs. Pugh could cook them. The season closed on the last day of the month, which was the Tuesday following.

They took the field regretfully that last morning. It had been a happy outing, all too short. The judge and the doctor and Mr. Conway must return to the courtroom and the office in Detroit. Those left behind would miss them, for they had proved good friends and merry companions.

Buntz was stationed on a great log, overlooking a main runway. The day was cold, with the keen, still cold of the north. More snow had fallen within a few days, until there was now a foot of it on the level.

The drive was started two miles away to the east. Mr. Prescott was posted on one side of the boy, Judge Bancroft on the other. There promised to be plenty of sport. Already, though it was scarcely nine o'clock, rifle shots had sounded from the direction of the drive.

Buntz walked back and forth on his log, which was about twenty feet long. Occasionally he stamped his feet, which were tingling with the cold. He noticed that the log swayed a little when he stamped, but paid no attention to it. Probably fire had eaten the heart out of it, he thought, so it was nothing but an empty shell, and its lightness made it move beneath his weight.

A deer appeared off to his right. It was a long shot, more than three hundred yards, but he took careful aim and fired. Away scampered the animal, apparently unhurt, and he hurriedly sent another bullet after it. Then a most surprising thing happened.

The log tilted and threw him sprawling into the snow. From the smooth, deep drift at one end of it, a great, black, furry head appeared. There

were sniffs and struggles. The snow was churned about, and rose in clouds. A body followed the head. Soon a black bear, towering higher than a man, got to his hind legs.

Bruin had been roused by the thumping of Buntty's feet and the shots, from his winter's sleep. He had chosen snug quarters in the hollow log, and being routed out made him ill-tempered. Still blinking stupidly, he peered about for some one to quarrel with.

The boy saw that this was his chance. Perhaps a more experienced hunter would not have been so foolhardy. But he did not think of danger. He thought only of securing so noble a quarry. He aimed at the shaggy throat and fired.

The bear dropped on all fours as the bullet went home. Then he rose with a snarl of rage. His wicked little eyes were suddenly cleared of the film of sleep. Teeth gleaming and blood dripping from his jaws, he charged lumberingly toward his assailant.

Buntty realized, too late, what he had done. The monster was not fatally wounded; he was simply stung to wild anger by the pain of the bullet. Now he was coming to take swift vengeance on this puny human who had attacked him.

Retreat was impossible. The log, shoulder high and slippery with snow, penned him in. And the

bear was not fifteen yards distant. Even had the way been clear, he could not have taken a score of steps before those great claws would be tearing him.

So he stood his ground. Throwing the rifle to his shoulder, he sent bullet after bullet into the onrushing black bulk. They seemed to have no more effect than peas, for the bear kept coming, his blood dyeing the snow at every step.

The boy did not flinch. His back against the log, he worked the gun with the courage of despair. Crack! Crack! Crack!

The animal was upon him! He thrust the muzzle of the gun fairly into the gaping jaws, and pulled the trigger for the last time.

Down came the big foreleg in a sidewise swing. It struck Buntz in the side with a force that drove the breath from his body. Over the log he went, as though tossed from a springboard.

When Mr. Prescott and the doctor came hurrying up, alarmed by the rapid firing, they found the bear, quite dead, partially over the log. Buntz, dazed, was lying in a drift a dozen feet away, trying hard to get his breath. Bruin's dying blow had ripped through his thick clothing and the claws had left shallow furrows in his side.

He was hurried back to the cabin, and Dr. McFarland made a thorough examination. He

found that the boy was not seriously injured. Apart from the fact that the scratches smarted considerably, and that his side pained for a week or so, he was as well as ever.

The bear proved to be a monster—as heavy as two deer. That night the “Au Sable River Hunting Association” paused long enough in its packing to elect as president the lad propped up in his bunk with pillows: “The greatest hunter of us all.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WINTER IN THE WILDERNESS

With December, winter came in earnest. Snow sifted down in great, wavering flakes until the whole appearance of the barrens changed. The river, except at the shallows, where the brown water rippled cheerily, was tucked away in its thick white blanket. The trees bent low under their burdens. Most of the underbrush had disappeared, for the snow was a good three feet deep on the level. Huge drifts came to the eaves of the cabin.

Redbird took charge of the game which had been killed. Some of the meat was "jerked," so that it would keep during the winter. It was rendered dry and tough by the process, though remaining a nourishing food. The rest was salted in barrels, excepting part of the bear and one deer. These were left hanging out, frozen, for daily use.

The Indian knew the secret of tanning in the wilderness. He gathered oak and hemlock bark and certain plants. These were steeped together

over a fire, and by means of the brew the hides were tanned.

For days he kneaded and rubbed the skins with the steaming liquid until they became soft and pliable. The result was a pile of beautiful rugs. He also removed the hair from two deerhides. These gave a supply of buckskin, for which the settler finds some use nearly every day.

The weeks passed swiftly. School had been resumed. All the pupils made good progress in their studies. Christmas was celebrated by a special program and a gift-laden tree, handsomely lighted. Mr. and Mrs. Pugh and Mrs. Fox attended the exercises, and were remembered with gifts, much to their delight.

The snow was so deep that snowshoes were necessary for getting about. Using twisted rawhide and hickory, Redbird made a pair for Bunty and another for Mr. Prescott, for their "store" ones had proven unsatisfactory. Snowshoes are awkward-looking affairs, shaped something like a tennis racquet. Despite their seeming clumsiness, a person can travel swiftly and easily on them through loose, deep snow.

Rain came in January—just enough to form a stout crust over the surface of the drifts. Then Redbird made them all skis.

A ski (pronounced "skee") is a flat, narrow

piece of wood, six or eight feet long, and turning up slightly in front. In the center is a thong, and into this thong the foot is slipped. The ski-runner travels by advancing one foot and then the other, without lifting them, somewhat as though he were skating. A stout, sharp pole helps him to travel fast.

Ski-running proved great sport, though father and son took many tumbles in learning how to do it. The Foxes all had skis, too, and the whole party rambled far over the countryside. Bunty frequently made the rounds of a line of traps with one or another of the Fox boys.

One bitter night about the middle of February, father and son were awakened by a knocking on their door.

“Who is there?” called Mr. Prescott.

“Pugh,” replied the Englishman; “let me in.”

They knew from the sound of his voice that something had happened. Mr. Prescott made haste to open the door. Bunty never forgot the thrill of horror which swept over him when the Englishman said: “The battleship *Maine* has been blown up in Havana harbor, and most of her crew are killed.”

Pugh and his father sat up until far into the night. They replenished the fire with logs and sat before it, talking in low tones. Bunty lis-

tened from his bunk until sleep overcame him. Once his father said: "It means I will have to bid you good-bye soon. There must be war, now."

The Englishman replied: "I know how you feel about it. If they needed me, I would enlist, myself. What are you going to do with the boy?"

And his father said: "Frankly, Pugh, I don't know. He is as well as ever now, but I'm afraid of having him remain in the city. He is growing rapidly and it would be well to have him in the open air as much as possible. It's quite a problem."

Buntty went to sleep with the comfortable feeling that it was no problem to him: He was going to Cuba with his father!

From that night of Pugh's tidings there was a change. The feel of stirring things was in the air. The newspapers and the people cried aloud for war. The Fox boys began starting their sentences to Buntty regretfully: "After you go away——"

February gave place to blustery March. The winds blew wildly, thrashing through the ragged wilderness. The great drifts shrank in on themselves. Toward the end of the month the crows came drifting back from the south. There were thousands of them, and they greeted the little settlement with harsh cries.

Bare patches began to appear on the hillsides. The ice on the river rotted. Snowball battles were the daily amusement at recess. All the earth was awakening sweetly from the long, cold sleep of winter.

In April Mr. Prescott began packing the camp supplies in the big boxes which had brought them. Bunty ranged the barrens like a young wild thing, as fleet and tireless and healthy as the furry creatures he surprised. He found the shy, fragrant, trailing arbutus and sent great bunches of it to his friends in Detroit.

The month was wearing to a close when the message came for which Mr. Prescott had been waiting. Frequent letters from military friends had prepared him for it. Yet his heart beat rapidly when at sunrise one morning a young man on a sweating horse rode into the clearing.

“Thought you might want this right away, Mr. Prescott,” he said, passing over a small yellow envelope, “so I brought it right out.”

Mr. Prescott, with Bunty standing on tiptoe beside him to see, tore open the envelope and read:

“War declared. Regiment ordered to Island Lake. Can you report there 26th? Answer. Mainwaring, colonel.”

And this message went back: "I will be there. Prescott."

From that time on they were busy with preparations for leaving. Bunty looked with regret at the winter camp. It would not be easy to break away from it all.

CHAPTER XXXIX

GOOD-BYE TO THE WILDERNESS

The Foxes came over as usual for school. Their faces fell when they heard the news and saw the preparations for departure. But they made the best of it. All but "Red" turned in to help pack. He went home to hitch up the team. The Fox family would drive to Grayling with their friends.

Bunty was excited and much pleased at the prospect of going away, but he was sorry too. To live in a camp where there were thousands of soldiers, hear the bands play daily, and see the drilling and marching! His heart beat joyfully. But then he thought of leaving Englishman's Camp and Redbird and Pugh and the Foxes. No more wandering through the barrens; no more hunting and fishing; no more trips down the swift Au Sable; no more snowshoe and ski tramps over the hills. Tears came to his eyes unbidden. He had grown to love the north country, and next year he and his father would come back to it.

Soon the boxes were packed and strapped. Pugh promised to send them to Detroit by freight.

This attended to, there was nothing to detain the travelers longer.

“Red” drove in with the Fox team just then, so they started. Mr. and Mrs. Pugh and Mr. Prescott and Bunty rode in one wagon, and the Foxes in the other. Redbird had slipped away when the packing was finished. He had said to Hugo: “See you downtown.” Doubtless he was well on his way to Grayling already.

The drive to Grayling was uneventful. Nobody talked much; the coming parting weighed on their minds. It was mid-afternoon when they reached the village. They found the streets crowded with an enthusiastic throng of woodsmen, Indians, business men and settlers. “War” was on every tongue.

News soon spreads in a little town, and everybody knew of Mr. Prescott and the telegram he had received. They were aware of the fact that he was hastening back to join his regiment. His name was on every tongue. The first man of their acquaintance to answer his country’s call, in their eyes he was a hero.

“There he is now!” cried some one as the wagons turned into the straggling business street. There was an outburst of cheers and hand clapping. “Fall in, fall in!” sounded on every

hand. Soon the sidewalks were deserted, and a procession had formed behind the wagons.

Away they went down the street toward the railroad station. A merchant rushed out with a large American flag and handed it to Bunty. The boy held it proudly aloft.

Some one shouted "Rally round the flag, boys!" In an instant they were all singing the stirring song.

A barber, wearing his white duck coat, left the customer he was shaving, to find out what it was all about. He ran back into his shop, threw the razor into a drawer, grabbed his cornet off its nail on the wall, and fell in behind the wagon, blowing away like mad. From stores and cross streets other musicians came hurrying up. Here a man with the bass drum; there the trombone player; yonder the snare-drummer. Soon the Grayling Cornet band was marching along, playing as spiritedly as though it had been rehearsing such a parade for a month.

As for the man in the barber's chair, he wiped the lather off his face and ran out to join the procession too. He did not notice, nor did anybody else, that only half of his face had been shaved.

The patriotic enthusiasm deepened. At the station Mr. Prescott was almost mobbed. They

crowded around to shake hands with him and to wish him good luck. "Three cheers for Major Prescott!" was proposed. They were given with such a will that a curious deer, sniffing about a deserted cabin a mile up-river, tossed his foolish head and ran away in fright.

Bunty was not overlooked. As he stepped out of the wagon, a brawny settler tossed the boy onto his shoulder, and called for "Three cheers for Little White Chief!" The roar which followed sped the fleeing deer on his way.

Mr. Prescott, despite the confusion, managed to get his friends together for a quiet farewell. They all slipped away behind the depot, while the band played patriotic tunes out in front.

"You don't know how it grieves me to go," he said, looking into the circle of earnest faces. "We have been here nearly a year, Hugo and I, and it has been the happiest year of our lives. You have all been very good to us; we will never forget it."

"That's all nonsense, Mr. Prescott," said Fox, with a roughness which did not hide his true feelings. "You're the one that's been good to us! You've taught me, and you've taught my boys, to read and write. You've shown us what a good thing education is. You've been a true friend!"

"I'm glad you reminded me of the school," said

Mr. Prescott. "How would you like to have it go on right along?"

The look on their eager faces, as they crowded closer, was answer enough.

"Well," he continued, "I believe it can be managed. Build a log school house over west of you, Fox, where the Pomeroy's, the Joneses, and that new family that's just come in can get to it, and I'll furnish a teacher."

They all began talking at once, assuring him the school would be ready within two weeks. He nodded, pleased at their eagerness.

"That's good," he smiled. "The teacher is a young friend of mine who lives in Detroit. He taught last year. But he's a delicate chap, and his lungs will go back on him if he doesn't get away from the city. He's anxious to come up here, and I've guaranteed his salary."

"Guarantee if you want, but we'll pay for it!" declared Fox vigorously. "Education isn't worth havin', if it doesn't teach one to pay for what he gets!"

"We'll all help," said Pugh, quietly, speaking for the first time.

A little more talk, and the good-byes were said. They shook hands all around. Mrs. Pugh cried a little as she kissed Bunty, for she had grown very fond of the boy. "Roundy" blubbered heart-

brokenly, only to look up sturdily after a bit and offer to "rassle just once more."

Bunty's own eyes smarted. But something which Redbird and "Red" Fox said puzzled him so that he forgot his tears. They came up together, smiling, and took his hands. "No feel bad, Little White Chief," said Redbird. "Mebbe we see you bimeby, pretty soon."

"Why, whatever do you mean, Redbird?" asked the boy, with wide eyes. "We're going away, perhaps to Cuba—that is, daddy is, and I want to go with him. So how could you see us pretty soon?"

"Never mind; just wait—and watch," whispered "Red." And neither of them would say another word.

The train came puffing in, and father and son struggled through a lane of wildly cheering people to the cars. The band played "Auld Lang Syne" so loudly that the cornetist turned purple from his efforts.

There were three cheers and a tiger for Major Prescott, and three more for his son. Folks clung to the railing of the car and reached up to shake hands with them again.

They were off. The last man let go and dropped to the ground. They stood on the back platform, waving their hats until the shouts of their new-

found friends and the notes of the band were lost in the roar of the train. The crowd faded to a mere blur, with a dash of bright color above it.

The dash of color was the flag, which Bunty had handed to Pugh. The Englishman was waving it back and forth above his head.

They stood together in silence until Grayling had vanished, and the jack pine hills shut it in behind them. "Daddy," said Bunty wistfully, "may I go to Cuba with you? We'd have such a good time together!"

"But I don't know that I'm going there myself!"

"Yes, but if you do, daddy?"

Mr. Prescott put his arm about the boy's shoulders and hugged him. "Well, old man," he smiled, "we'll see; we'll see!"

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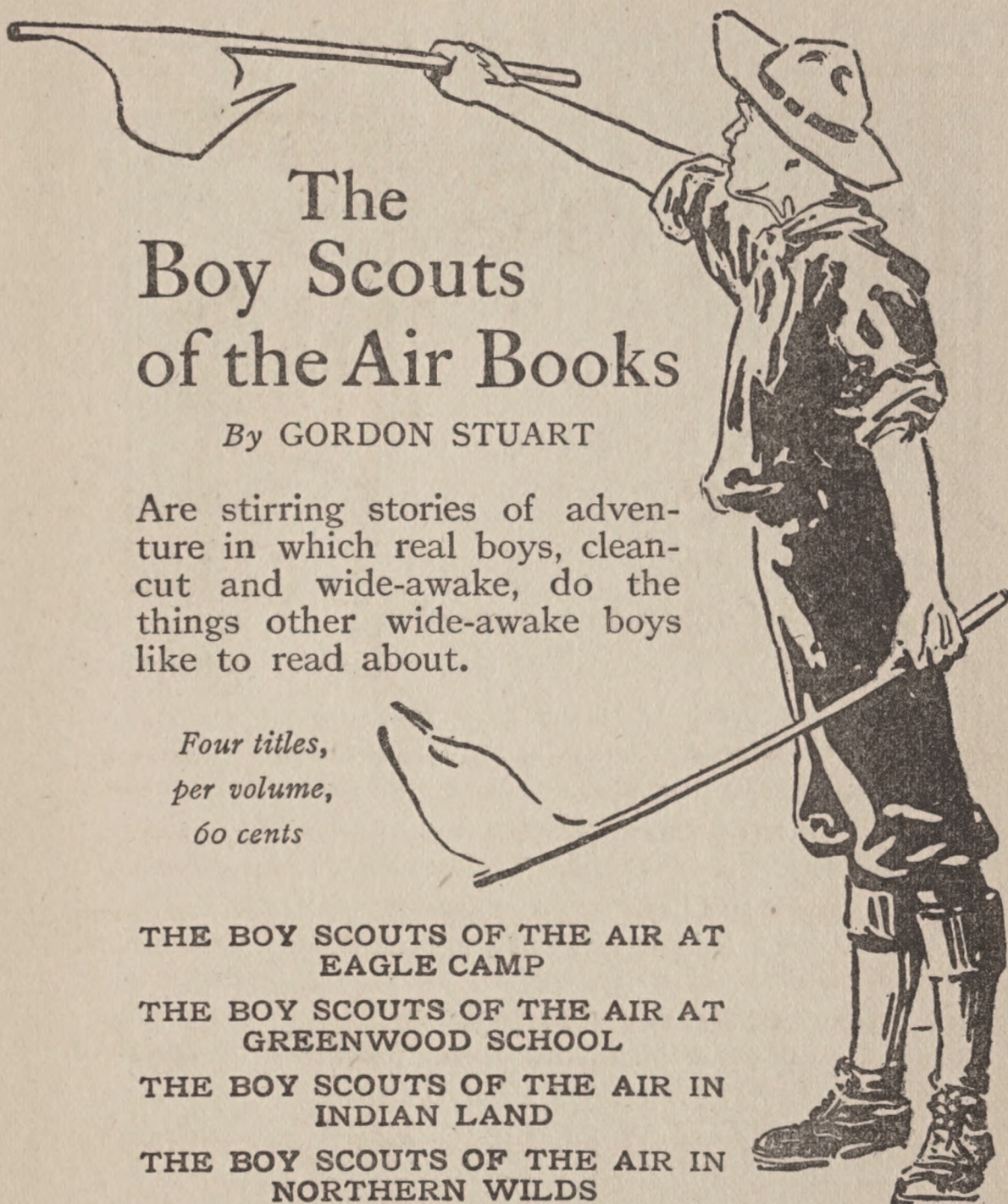
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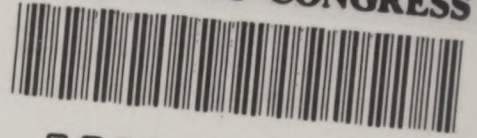
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